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WEE LUCY SEWING.

Page **2.**

HILDREN

LUCY'S SECRET

BY

SOPHIE MAY

OF "LITTLE PRUDY STORIES," "DOTTY DIMENTS STORIES," "LITTLE PRUDY'S FLAXAWAY SERIES," "FAIRY PUZZLE SERIES," "THE QUINNEBASSET SERIES," ETC.

BOSTON
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1899

LITTLE PRUDY'S CHILDREN

WEE LUCY'S SECRET

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AUTHOR OF "LITTLE PRUDY STORIES," "DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES" "LITTLE PRUDY'S FLYAWAY SERIES," "FLAXIE FRIZZLE SERIES," "THE QUINNEBASSET SERIES," ETC.

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TO

Two Little Friends Anywhere

WHO LOVE EACH OTHER DEARLY

TO HELP THEM REMEMBER THAT

"LOVE IS THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD"

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WEE LUCY'S SECRET

I

AT GRANDMA PARLIN'S

At the time our story begins, Lucy Dunlee was six and a half years old. Her head reached to her mother's waist, so you see she was no longer "wee"; but as you might not know her as well by any other name, we will still call her "wee Lucy."

Her home was in California; but all the Dunlees were making a six months' visit in the East. Just now wee Lucy was in Willowbrook with her mother and brother Jimmy and the baby, while the rest of the family were still in New York. Mrs. Dunlee had

come to Willowbrook earlier than the others because Grandpa and Grandma Parlin were so impatient to see her and the children. "Aunt Vi" — Mrs. Sanford of Washington — had come with her, and was boarding at a hotel, but called every day at Grandma Parlin's, and sometimes read aloud from the little book she was writing for Christmas.

Jimmy and Lucy had begun to go to school in the white schoolhouse. Grandpa Parlin thought them wonderful children, and was very proud of Lucy because she was keeping a diary.

"Who ever heard the like for a child of that age?" said grandpa. "See how she handles a pen, and what a big round hand she writes! Why, I can almost read it without my glasses!"

One Saturday morning Lucy was sitting in her little rocking-chair in the upper hall, and supposed to be hemming a pillow-case. In

reality she was playing with her doll, Queen Dido. The royal Dido, quite large and dignified, sat in a high chair before an old-fashioned light-stand, on which were placed a few tiny dishes and some napkins.

"No, Dido, you can't have any turkey," said Lucy, shaking her head; "it's not good for you. Bimeby when I've taken two stitches, I'll give you some toast. You've been very sick, Dido; I spected you'd die."

Lucy plunged her needle into the cloth and drew it out again.

"'Member, Dido, if you're naughty at grandma's house, you'll have to go in the closet."

The little mother took another stitch.

"Oh, you bad, bad child to snatch! Now you can't have another drop of that 'ladies' luncheon.' You make me so much trouble when I'm busy; yes, you do, Dido."

Lucy rose from the rocking-chair with great decision, put the light-stand in a corner, shut the queen doll in a closet, and seated herself on the highest stair with her sewing.

"There, my child is 'tended to! Now I'll take twelve stitches on this stair, then I'll go down to the next stair and take twelve more."

Grandma Parlin had taught her this way of doing her stint; twelve stitches for every stair. As there were twelve stairs, you can see at once that she was sure to have taken one hundred and forty-four stitches by the time she reached the bottom. A good morning's work, grandma said, if the stitches were only fine and evenly set.

But there were many things just now to hinder Lucy. After Dido had been disposed of, Jill, the cat, sprang over the balusters prepared for a frolic; a little later, the dog

Pompey; and last of all the baby appeared, and wanted to "go a-walking" with Lucy.

"No, no, you little dear. Mamma spects me to work. I wish I was little, like you; then I wouldn't have to work so hard."

"Well, me want to go a-walkin'," persisted Eddo, drawing a piteous sigh.

He was a very pretty boy, with fair hair so much like Lucy's that Jimmy said it "looked as if it came off the same piece." There had been a little Edward in the family long ago, but he went to heaven; and when this dear baby came, he was named for him, — Edward Dunlee, — though generally called Eddo. He was so sweet and cunning that people on the street often turned around for another look at him, and everybody wanted to kiss him.

Just now the hall clock was striking ten.

"What dat clock say?" asked Eddo.

"It says," replied Lucy, after counting the strokes, "it says ten."

"Den I *mus'* go a-walkin'!"

Lucy laughed, and her mother, coming in at that moment, laughed too.

"You may leave your sewing, my daughter, and go out a little way with the baby. You can finish your stint when you come back."

I am afraid they all spoiled Eddo; but, by the bright look on Lucy's face as she sprang up from the next-to-the-top stair, it appeared that she had not the slightest objection to leaving her work.

"Oh, here's Jimmy," she said. "Don't you want to go with us, Jimmy?"

Jimmy — a tall boy of eight and a half — did not look as if he cared particularly for the walk.

"I'll go as far as the corner," said he; "then I must go a-fishing with Fred Cook."

Fred Cook was his seat-mate and chum.

"Isn't his name Cookie?" asked Lucy. "The boys call him Cookie."

"Well, I don't," declared Jimmy. "How would you like it yourself?"

They were now on the street, the baby clutching Jimmy's forefinger, the sister carrying her sick doll well wrapped for an airing.

"It looks so yellow all 'round here, just like our yellow poppies," remarked Lucy, surveying the fields gay with dandelions.

"Yes; but *I'd* rather be firing snowballs," returned Jimmy. "I'll have a chance at 'em next fall, though."

"Don't fire any at me, will you, Jimmy? I don't want to get hurt."

"You'll have to stand out of the way, then! I'll send 'em going *whiz* when the snow comes," said Jimmy, drawing in his breath gleefully.

"But what I'd like best is to hunt for deer; deer with big horns spreading out like a tree— Whoop-ee!"

"There now, I want to see 'em myself. Does Santa Claus find his deers up here in Maine?" asked Lucy playfully.

She was not in earnest; but baby Eddo caught the magic name, Santa Claus, and, breaking away from Jimmy, almost turned a somersault in the road. He knew now that he was in Santa Claus Land; and wasn't it jolly?

"Great country up here," pursued Jimmy, dusting the baby as they walked on. "'Twas along up here somewhere that Captain Kidd buried all that money."

"Money? What for?"

"Why, didn't you ever hear of Captain Kidd? He was the greatest pirate anywhere round; had more gold and jewels than ever

you saw. Put 'em in the ground to hide 'em; and there they are now."

"Well, that's funny! Why don't folks go and dig 'em up?"

"They would if they knew where to dig. But you see he was sailing 'round in the night" —

"On the ocean?"

"I don't remember, 'twas so long ago — maybe 'twas a river. Anyway he heard somebody after him, and landed *somewhere*, and hustled all the gold and things into a hole in the ground."

"Who told you, Jimmy?"

"Oh, I always knew. Everybody has heard of Captain Kidd that's heard of anything."

This was rather crushing to the little sister till Jimmy added as a polite afterthought — "All but girls."

Then Lucy said brightly: —

"Well, Aunt Vi will know; she knows everything. I'm going to ask her, and she'll tell me the very place."

"There, that sounds just like you, Lucy Dunlee! You think all you've got to do is to take your little spade and dig."

"I never, never thought of taking my little spade!" exclaimed Lucy, much aggrieved. "When you talk in that kind o' way, Jimmy Dunlee, I don't think it's *quite* so very nice."

"Not quite so very" was a favorite phrase with Lucy; she thought it extremely elegant.

"Oh, I was only in fun," Jimmy hastened to say, recollecting suddenly that his parents did not permit him to tease his little sister. But wee Lucy was a fanciful child, and sometimes made remarks so queer that Jimmy found it hard to keep properly sober.

"Hark!" said he, "there's a train coming."

As he spoke there was a piercing whistle;

and Eddo, screaming with fright, climbed into his brother's arms for protection.

"There, there, darling, don't be afraid! Brother'll take care of you," said Jimmy tenderly. "Just see, he's trembling all over! Poor little kid! When he has travelled so much in the cars, I shouldn't think he'd be afraid of an engine."

"He's 'fraider than he was before he went in the cars," replied Lucy; "he grows 'fraider all the whole time."

"Look here now," said Jimmy, gazing down at the child with fatherly anxiety, "he's too old to act this way; I'm going to put a stop to it when I get time."

"How can you?"

"Oh, I'll show you! I'm in a hurry now; got to go a-fishing."

When they returned to the house, Lucy went to the sitting room to finish her stint.

But first she must write in her diary. There was something on her mind, and she could hardly wait, though all she had to put in the diary was this:—

"Jimmy has a chum at scoohl named Cookie. Some of the girls has chums. I think it is nice. There is not any chum for me."

When this had been written, Lucy closed the diary with the blotter inside, wiped her pen, whirled about in her chair and thought she was lonesome. She had never thought of it before; but she thought of it again that afternoon, because Aunt Vi did not call as early as usual. At four o'clock the door-bell rang and Lucy flew to the door.

"Oh, Auntie Vi, it's you, it's you! I kept going to the door, but there was nobody there but men-people. I want you here, 'cause I — I" —

"Because you love me, I hope," said Mrs. Sanford. "I love to be loved."

And throwing her cape across the hat-tree she caught up wee Lucy and kissed her again and again. As they entered the sitting-room everybody looked up and smiled, and baby Eddo gave a crow of delight. Aunt Vi went around and kissed them all, then sat down and took Lucy in her lap.

"Well, dear, how are you getting on at school?" she asked. "I believe you have a nice girl sitting with you."

"Not so nice as the boy that sits with Jimmy. I did like Sadie Morse, Auntie Vi; but now I don't like her *quite* so very well."

"Ah, I am sorry. Do you know why you don't like her as much as you did?"

"Well, she makes faces behind her slate. But that isn't why. She — shook — Phebe Dow!"

"What, that poor little lame girl?"

"Yes; wears crutches. Phebe hit Sadie with her crutch; *she* couldn't help it. Is it right for folks to shake lame folks, Auntie Vi?"

"Indeed it is not. The lame and the sick should be very, very tenderly treated."

Lucy nodded assent. She had heard this again and again from her parents.

"Well, Sadie Morse keeps asking me to be chums with her; but what do I want to be chums with *her* for?"

As Lucy spoke she looked up at Mrs. Sanford admiringly, and thought how pretty she was and what fine lace she wore on her dress. Without waiting for an answer to her last question she exclaimed: —

"Aunties are the nicest things! Don't you like it, Auntie Vi?"

"Do you mean being an auntie? Yes, I've always liked it very much."

"Well, I'd like it too. I'd like to be an auntie my own self and have 'em say 'Auntie Lucy' to *me!*"

"Ho, that's great?" cried Jimmy, looking up from his book.

"Now, Jimmy Dunlee, you know little girls *can* be aunties, for you saw one, same as I did; Janey Barber; she was littler than me. And Auntie Vi was a little girl when they made *her* an auntie; she said so."

"True," said Mrs. Sanford. "I was not quite eleven when your sister Kyzie was born. That was the time they made me an auntie, to be sure."

"Well, I'm 'most seven. Don't you think they might make me an auntie, I'm growing so fast?"

Mrs. Sanford and Mrs. Dunlee smiled; but the child was in sober earnest. She had already asked three of her schoolmates, one

after another, "May I be auntie to you?" But the little schoolmates had only stared at her. They all happened to have aunties of their own, and did not care for play-aunts.

But, strange to say, a new little girl was coming to Willowbrook who would care very much — who really longed for an auntie, whatever the size of the auntie might be.

This young stranger had been crossing the Atlantic Ocean while Lucy was crossing the United States. As Lucy had never seen her, of course she had not been thinking of her as she rode in the cars. Neither had the new little girl been thinking of Lucy while riding in the steamboat. But now they were to meet very soon, and you shall hear what came of it.

II

A NEW LITTLE FRIEND

A FEW days later Lucy came home to dinner, her hair flying, her eyes shining, and said as she dropped into her chair at the table: —

"Oh, mamma, I just saw a little girl, the blackest-haired-est little girl! Hair all braided down her back. I talked to her, and she said her name was Barbara C. Hale. I wish my hair was straight and braided down my back."

"Hale?" repeated mamma, looking interested. "I've heard of a little Barbara Hale; but she is ever so far away. I'm glad you like this little girl, my dear."

"Oh, I do, mamma, I do! And I'm going to be auntie to her, as true's you live!" Lucy flourished a bit of potato on her fork, forgetting to eat it. "I'm going to be auntie to her, I promised her I would."

They all laughed at this but grandpa, who was deaf; and when he had been told what amused them, he laughed with the rest.

"A great auntie *you'll* be," said Jimmy; "a speck of a girl like you."

"Well, Auntie Vi was auntie when *she* was a little girl; don't you know that? And Barbara C. Hale never had an auntie in her life, or any grandma, or *anything* hardly! Just a grandpa 'way off!"

"Well, what of it?" said Jimmy.

"Why, I can be auntie to her just as well as not; I know how they act!"

"Whoop-ee! I can be uncle to Fred Cook then. I know how uncles act!"

But Lucy was not to be silenced by ridicule.

"Folks don't want you to be their uncles, and you know it, Jimmy Dunlee! Barbara wants me to be her auntie; she seemed just as pleased! It won't do any harm; will it, mamma?"

"No, probably not, my dear. Only I would like to see the little niece before I am quite sure. Poor little girl, I am very sorry for her. When did she lose her father and mother?"

"Oh, she didn't lose 'em, she's got those things," said Lucy lightly. "But that's all she's got. She did have a kitty. The kitty was white, with one eye blue and one eye kind of green yellow; but they wouldn't let her take the kitty on the ship when they came from Plaster o' Paris. Wasn't it too bad?"

Mrs. Dunlee dropped her fork. What could Lucy mean by "Plaster o' Paris"?

"Look at me, my daughter. Think before you speak. Did this child come across the ocean in a ship?"

"Yes, she came in a ship; she couldn't come any other way," replied Lucy, surprised at the question. "You know the ocean's full o' water, mamma."

"And you say her name is"—

"Barbara C. Hale, mamma; but they call her Bab."

"It must be Fanny Hale's child," exclaimed Mrs. Dunlee, turning to Grandma Parlin. "You remember, grandma, my old friend, Fanny Harlow, of Portland, married Joseph Hale of Willowbrook. Can they have returned from Europe?"

"Very likely," replied grandma. "I forgot you used to know Joseph's wife, or I should have told you about it. We heard they were to settle on the Pacific coast; but first they

were coming here to stay awhile at the old place."

"Delightful!" said Mrs. Dunlee. "I haven't seen Fanny Harlow since she was married. It will be odd enough if we are to meet here this summer."

"Oh, won't Bab be glad you're my mamma?" cried Lucy in raptures. "Bab lives in that big house top o' the high hill; she said so."

"That's it; that's the old place — the Colonel Hale place," said Mrs. Dunlee. "I'm going up there this very afternoon."

"Mayn't I go with you?" begged wee Lucy. "And aren't you willing Bab and I should be chums? She's the best girl I ever saw! Oh, we love each other so!"

This sudden friendship was very amusing to the whole family; but Mrs. Dunlee held up a warning forefinger when Jimmy would have teased Lucy. She knew that the affec-

tion of two little children may prove a most beautiful thing, and she was too wise to let any one laugh at it.

When she went with her daughter that afternoon and saw the new chum, she did not wonder that Lucy had found her charming. Barbara was a gentle, dark-haired little girl, with loving brown eyes and the sweetest of smiles. She was an only child; and her mother said she really seemed to be pining for a friend who could take a sister's place in her loving little heart.

Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Dunlee were rejoiced to meet again after so many years; but the two little girls appeared to be just as happy together as the two mammas. They walked about the lawn with their arms about each other's waists, talking very fast, as if they had been the dearest friends from babyhood.

"Happy little creatures!" said Mrs. Hale.

"This play of auntie and niece can't last long; but isn't it amusing? Lucy is much taller than my little Bab, though almost exactly her age, is she not?"

"I'm a *little* older'n Bab," spoke up Miss Lucy, with a fine air of dignity. "She'll be seven the ninth day o' November and I'll be seven the thirtieth day o' November. Thirty's more'n nine, you know."

The mothers said nothing to this. Barbara smiled pleasantly. She supposed that Lucy was not only somewhat older than herself, but far wiser; and, being a modest little girl, Bab was quite willing to look up to her superiors.

"She wanted me to be auntie to her, Mrs. Hale," said Lucy earnestly; "and I'm going to try, if you and mamma are willing."

"We are perfectly willing," said Mrs. Hale, and then she and Mrs. Dunlee both hid their

faces in their pocket-handkerchiefs. The children looked at them wonderingly.

"If you are an auntie to my child," went on Mrs. Hale very soberly, "if you are a real auntie to her, my dear Lucy, I suppose you will feel the care of her? She has never been to school much; she has had teachers at home. If I send her to school, will you see that she behaves properly?"

"I'll try," replied the wee auntie, well pleased to be treated with such unusual respect. "I'll try just as hard!"

"Thank you, dear. It will be beautiful to have my little girl in your charge, and a great relief to me! There, now run off to play, you dear little goosies."

Lucy looked at Mrs. Hale, and thought she seemed to be trying to hide a smile. She found afterward, when she knew the lady better, that she did have a singular way of

smiling at things that weren't in the least funny. But Lucy forgave her for this because she was Bab's mother.

As the little girls walked about the lawn chatting sociably, their mothers heard now and then a few words of the conversation.

"Oh, Bab," said Lucy, "I'm so glad your mamma wants me to be auntie to you!"

"Oh, Auntie Lucy, I'm gladder'n you are; I know I am!"

And Barbara touched her new friend's shoulder with her rosy cheek. She was nearly half a head shorter than Lucy.

"I loved you the first minute I saw you, Bab. Such pretty hair! I wish my hair was that color and hung down straight."

"Now Auntie Lucy, what makes you say that? Straight hair is just horrid! I like your hair; it's goldy color; and what does

make it curl so fluffy? I never saw anybody I liked so much as I do you!"

"Nor I either," responded Lucy. "Once there was a little girl was chums with me, — her name's Betty Davis, — but she's gone to Santa Barbara to stay for always. I never spected there'd be anybody so nice as Betty; but you are, oh, Bab, you truly are!"

At the end of an hour these new friends were so intimate that they had made a faithful promise to tell each other "every single thing."

"I'll do it to you if you'll do it to me," said Lucy.

"Y-e-s; but I don't know of anything to tell, Auntie Lucy. Only my grandpa's coming here in two weeks, and" —

"That's nothing; you told me that before."

"Well, I can't think of anything else."

And little Bab looked quite discouraged till Lucy said, —

"And I can't either."

Whereupon Bab held up her head again.

"Oh, I am so glad, Auntie Lucy. I s'posed you'd have something and I hadn't."

"Well, I can't think of anything great to tell, not so very *special* great," admitted Lucy. "Only there's one thing I can tell. Before we came in the cars from California, I heard my mamma say to my papa, 'When we get to the big city of New York, won't it be funny to see Lucy open her eyes?' And papa said it would. So then I thought I wouldn't open my eyes at all when the conductor said 'New York.' And I didn't; I shut 'em just as tight!"

"Oh, how could you?" said Bab.

"And bimeby I asked papa, '*Did* my eyes come open, papa?' And he said they didn't.

And then he and mamma, how they laughed! But there, that's nothing. I don't think much of that," added Lucy, tossing her curls. "I'll have something bimeby, Bab. I just know there'll be something happen; and I'll tell you, and you'll tell me, and we won't tell anybody else. 'Twill be a secret just for you and me."

"Won't that be nice?" said Bab. "Just like the big girls, auntie. And we'll see which will have the first secret to tell."

"Good-by, dear," said Lucy as they parted. "Now I've called on you and you must call on me. I want you to see my brother Jimmy and my brother Eddo, and all there is at my grandpa's house. Come to-morrow morning right after breakfast. Will you 'member? Right after breakfast."

III

"BEGINNING TO BE HAPPY"

BAB appeared at Grandma Parlin's next morning at nine o'clock, looking very fresh and dainty in a buff gingham with tucks in the skirt. Lucy was glad it was Saturday, for now she had plenty of time to introduce the little niece to "all there was at grandpa's house," including, of course, the horse and cow and dogs and chickens.

First of all she would have borne her off to the barn to hunt for hens' eggs; but mamma quietly led the way to the sitting-room.

"This is Joseph Hale's little girl," said she to grandma and grandpa, who welcomed the

guest with smiles, and said she "looked very much like her father."

Barbara loved them in a moment. No one could see those dear people without loving them. Grandpa had an easy-chair in a corner near the fireplace, and sat there with the big Bible on his knees. He was very fond of children, and told Mrs. Dunlee afterward that Joseph Hale's daughter was "a womanly little girl; he guessed she was having a good bringing up."

Grandpa was a large man. Bab could understand why he was Lucy's "great-grandpapa." But his wife was a small woman; what made them call her a great-grandma? She had an easy-chair in the other corner of the fireplace, and rose from it to put a fresh stick of wood on the bright brass andirons. She wore a white lace cap over her soft gray hair; and Bab saw that she was

knitting some little red mittens. When Lucy explained that the mittens were intended for a poor little boy to wear next winter, Bab decided that she must be a good woman, and wished more than ever that there were "grandmas enough to go 'round," so that she might have a grandma herself.

Jimmy was not at home just now; he had gone to "catch some silly old fishes."

"But this is my little brother Eddo," said Lucy with pride. "He'll let you kiss him."

And Bab, glad of the privilege, kissed him so many times that Eddo exclaimed, —

"Isn't dat funny?"

It was a pleasant, sunshiny room, with ivy growing all around the walls above the hanging pictures. In the corner was a large writing-desk. Lucy went to it and took out her diary to show it to Bab, who turned over the leaves with great interest. She had a

book in which she was trying to write her French exercises; but she had never kept a diary, or even thought of such a thing.

"Well, you'll learn," said the wee auntie. "I'll teach you."

There was a piano in the room, and Lucy announced that she "took lessons o' Miss Snell"; but this statement did not surprise the small niece, who had taken lessons herself ever since she could remember.

"You don't know who that kitty is," said Lucy, as Bab patted the tortoise-shell cat, who looked up at her with sleepy delight. "That kitty is Jill. You'll like Jill. And you'll like my Auntie Vi, too. But we can't go to the hotel to see Auntie Vi; mamma doesn't 'low it. Let's go out to the barn."

On their way to the barn they passed through the kitchen. Here were the two people — a man and his wife — who did the

work out of doors and in. They were Mr. and Mrs. Applebee, usually known as Hiram and Betsey. Hiram was tall and very thin; Betsey was short and very stout. She weighed two hundred pounds if she weighed an ounce.

Hiram was seated just now in a yellow wooden chair mending an old harness.

"Hello, little folks," said he, looking up. "Now I'd be willing to bet this is Joe Hale's little girl. What do they call you?"

"Barbara C. Hale," replied Bab, placing her dainty white hand in the large brown one which the man held out to her.

"Well, I'm glad your pa and ma concluded to come back from Europe. This is the best place to live in. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, she does," Lucy answered for her.

"Won't you shake hands with me, too?" said Betsey, putting down the cup-towel.

Bab complied. But how fat Betsey's hand was, with dimples in the back of it like a baby's!

"When is your grandpa coming? Folks will make a great fuss when he comes. They think there's nobody like your grandpa."

"He's coming in two weeks," replied Lucy, speaking for her again. "She lives up there on the hill; and she's going to be niece to me, and I'm going to be auntie to her. Yes, I am, Betsey; and everybody's willing."

Betsey suddenly disappeared into the pantry. Hiram took out his red silk handkerchief and held it to his nose.

"An auntie to her, hey?" said he, after he had thought it over for a while. "Where'd you get that notion? Ain't you rather young for such business?"

"Well, I'm older'n she is, and bigger'n she is. And she never had any auntie, and — and — everybody's willing."

"That's right; they ought to be," said Hiram heartily. "If you find anybody that don't seem to be willing, just send 'em to me."

Then he wiped his face again with the red handkerchief.

"He's a good man," said Lucy, as she and Bab proceeded to the barn. "He lets me stand right up there when he's milking, and he tells stories. He'll let you stand there with me. The cow won't hurt us."

"Well, I'd like to. But what does make Betsey so big?"

Lucy did not know. Probably she ate more than other people. Of course she ate more than Hiram, who was so thin that he had to keep a copper cent in his pocket, so he declared, to prevent him from blowing away.

"There, Bab, you see that little dog? That's Pompey. Isn't he pretty? The big dog is

Ranger. They love each other, and Ranger'll let Pompey do anything."

At this moment big Ranger was gnawing a beef-bone which Betsey had given him at the back door. Little Pompey made dashes at him in order to get the bone. Finally he took the bone right out of Ranger's mouth and ran off with it. Ranger did not care; he wagged his tail and shook himself as if he were laughing. He seemed to think Pompey's roguery was very cunning.

Lucy told Bab that Ranger and Pompey were on the street one day, and a big fierce dog came up to little Pompey, looking as if he wanted to fight him. Upon this Ranger marched Pompey home as fast as possible, and made him stay in the house. He was afraid the big dog might hurt him.

"Good Ranger," said Bab, patting the noble fellow on the head. She was not afraid of

animals; and indeed the animals at Grandpa Parlin's were not of the sort to cause alarm; they were all gentle, and seemed to love one another. There was a gray and white kitten living mostly in the barn, and remarkable for its friendship with the big black rooster. How there came to be this attachment nobody knew; but the black cock never went to roost at night but the kitten sprang up on the perch and slept there right beside him.

"Maybe he thinks the rooster is his grandpa," said Bab. "Isn't it lovely here, Auntie Lucy? The leaves are all so soft, like green smoke; and there's the seat in the tree you told about, with stairs to it."

"Yes; where my mamma used to play when she was a little girl. We'll play there too. Oh, we're just beginning to be happy!"

Jimmy appeared soon with plenty of fish.

line but no fish. He thought Bab an uncommonly nice little girl, and wished to show her that Lucy's brother was a boy of good manners. When Lucy asked if he didn't want to go to walk with them, he answered, "Thank you, I will," like a true gentleman. "But did you show Barbara the fountain I'm making?"

"I was just going to," said Lucy.

She and Bab followed Jimmy around to the back of the house, where there was a new flower-bed shaped like a star. Seeds had been sowed in it and would come up soon; but it was gay already with its border of pink heath.

"Here's where I'm putting in a fountain," said Master Jimmy, waving his hand toward an old flour barrel standing by the corner of the house. "I've found about a million old pipe-stems of Hiram's, and all I've got to

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do is to stick 'em into a hole in the barrel and let the water run through."

"What water?" asked Bab; for the barrel was empty.

"Oh, there'll be water enough when I fill it up! 'Twill run through the pipes and shoot right up *there*," pointing to the middle of the flower-bed. "That's the way to make a fountain."

"Won't it be lovely!" said Lucy, who had great confidence in her brother's skill. Bab thought a fountain was the very thing that was needed in a flower-bed.

"There, now, let's go to walk," said Jimmy, with serene satisfaction.

They had not counted on the baby; but Mrs. Dunlee thought he needed the air.

"Don't be gone long," said she. "The dressmaker wants to see you in half an hour Lucy."

The four children started off, Eddo holding Jimmy by the forefinger, the little girls skipping along with their arms about each other's waists.

"Bab can say some French," said Lucy. "Won't you tell Jimmy that verse you told me, Bab?"

Bab recited in excellent French: —

"Digerie, digerie doge!
Le rat ascend l'horloge;
L'horloge frappe,
Le rat s'échappe,
Digerie, digerie doge!"

"Is that French?" said Jimmy. "Why, she talks it off just as easy!"

"But you can't guess what it is, Jimmy. You've heard it lots o' times, — about the mouse ran up — Oh, I mustn't tell! You just guess."

"Say it once more, Bab," demanded Jimmy,

"I mean, please say it. There, I know now," he added after it had been repeated. "It's nothing but —

> "Dickory, dickory dock,
> The mouse ran up the clock."

"How *could* you guess it?" cried both the little girls in a breath.

"Poh, that's easy enough! But I don't think much of French," said Jimmy severely. "Why don't they say things as they ought to? I'd rather live in this country, where they say things right the first time."

Bab looked meekly at her boots. France must be a very poor country, to be so despised by Jimmy Dunlee!

There was a rumble of cars in the distance.

"Hello!" said Jimmy, "that engine will be along in just about a minute; and here's the baby!"

"Eddo is scared of an engine," Lucy explained to Bab.

Jimmy caught up the child, who struggled in his arms, preparing to scream.

"Now I'll tell you one thing," said Jimmy, turning to Lucy, "I'm going to put a stop to this. I won't have the little kid screaming at an engine."

He spoke with a resolute air, like a boy of twice his age.

"What can you do? I don't see what you can do," said Bab and Lucy in surprise.

"Well, you wait and you'll see. Here let's all stand still by the crossing. I'll toughen him to it. I can do it and not half try!"

The little girls did not exactly know what "toughening" meant; but they both looked at Jimmy with admiration, and Lucy whispered to Bab, —

"You know I told you my brother was splendid."

The cars were coming apace. It was near this crossing that the engine always gave one of its unearthly shrieks. Oh, what was Jimmy going to do to "toughen" little Eddo? Jimmy was wondrous wise; but Bab felt rather shy of boys with their strange ways.

"I almost want to go home," said she to herself, beginning to tremble.

And indeed, if they had all turned at that moment and gone homeward, it would have been better, far better, as they afterward knew.

IV

JIMMY AND EDDO

"SEE," said Jimmy to Eddo, "pretty little Choo Choo is coming. Poor little Choo Choo, so scared of Eddo! Just hear little Choo Choo scream!"

Eddo ceased crying as Jimmy spoke. Why, this was a new idea! He had never known before that engines are afraid of little boys! Actually afraid!

"Choo Choo" stopped short at the crossing, then began to go slowly backward.

"Scared of us," said Jimmy to the baby. "Scared as he can be!"

It certainly seemed like it.

"Oho!" murmured little Eddo, feeling all

at once very courageous. The terrible Choo Choo did not look half so terrible in going away as he had looked in coming. Eddo gazed after him, no longer trembling; and a warlike frown appeared on his small, soft face.

"Me s'oot dat Choo Choo with a 'tick o' wood," cried he, doubling his tiny fist.

It was very funny to see and hear him. Bab and Lucy had to lean against a telegraph-pole to laugh. Jimmy laughed, too, but managed to say: —

"Oh, fie, Eddo, *don't* shoot poor little Choo Choo! Don't hurt him, Eddo."

The baby began to relent. He was not so cruel as he was trying to look.

"No, don't hurt him," pleaded Bab and Lucy. "Poor little Choo Choo! Got a bad cold; hear him cough!"

This appeal went straight to Eddo's tender heart. The terrible thing was coming back

again, wheezing and puffing. Poor little Choo Choo! Sick enough to be in bed!

Exactly what was passing in Eddo's infant mind can only be surmised, for babies do not tell their inmost thoughts; but by the pitying glances which he cast upon the engine it was evident that he had decided not to shoot it,—that is, if it would not whistle! Up to this time I dare say he had regarded it as some fierce wild animal coming to trample upon him and perhaps eat him up. Now he knew better. It was a dear, sick animal, and for some singular reason it was in mortal terror of little boys. Too bad! Far be it from Eddo to harm the timid creature!

Jimmy saw what an impression had been made, and hastened to seize his advantage. Taking his little brother by the hand, he walked with him toward the slowly approaching monster.

"Come here, little Choo Choo!" said Jimmy coaxingly. "Eddo is a good boy; he won't hurt you."

Baby gripped his brother's hand very hard, but advanced boldly. He even smiled, a most reassuring, indulgent smile, and said in a cooing voice, as if addressing a kitten or a canary:—

"Tum here, little Choo Choo! Eddo won't hurt oo!"

Bab and Lucy had another giggle. Really this was very, very absurd! Choo Choo took courage and came; he came faster and faster, ringing a bell.

"There now," said Jimmy, as he lifted baby in his arms, and they all turned homeward, "we shan't have any more trouble; he's *toughened!*"

"Poor little fing!" said Eddo dreamily, turning his head to gaze after the sick Choo Choo.

The engine was nearly out of sight by this

time. It seemed to have dissolved in a dark trail of smoke which wound along in graceful curves. Was this the last appearance of Choo Choo? Things did come and go in just that strange way: Eddo had often noticed it. The sun went off sometimes; the lights went out. One thing was about as wonderful as another to his baby experience.

The children were gone more than half an hour, and when they returned the dressmaker was waiting.

"Come upstairs with me," said Mrs. Dunlee to Lucy. "Why, child, what is that big dark splash on your dress?"

"Jimmy thinks it's pitch," said Lucy calmly. "We went down where the cars are, and Eddo" —

"I will hear about it presently," said Mrs. Dunlee.

Lucy was always relating wonderful stories,

and just now there was no time to listen to this one. Later when Miss Parker had taken Lucy's measures, and the pitch had been removed from the child's frock, the untold story was not referred to again. Mrs. Dunlee had forgotten it for the time, and so indeed had Lucy and Jimmy.

But there was one dear little soul who did not forget, and that was Eddo himself. He remembered the whole thing only too well; and this was where the trouble came in.

Next day when Jimmy was dressing for church, the baby begged to go to see Choo Choo.

"No, this is Sunday, Eddo. I'll take you to-morrow," said Jimmy.

And on Monday he did take his little brother "across lots" to a spot where Choo Choo came around a curve in the track; and they had a long chat with the smoky giant.

Jimmy thought he was doing a very good thing; he felt proud of it. The giant whistled right in their faces; but Eddo stood his ground like a little hero, and scarcely winced when Choo Choo coughed and sneezed and screamed. He was no longer afraid; upon my word, he had begun to like the engine! He thought the big, noisy thing was a friend of his and came on purpose to see him. You must remember that Eddo was less than two years old, and did not know much more about some things than a white kitten.

If any of the grown people at Grandpa Parlin's had dreamed of this one-sided friendship, they would have seen the danger at once; but they knew nothing of Jimmy's "toughening" plan. It so happened that Jimmy did not mention it at home. He was so full of business that he simply forgot it, that was all.

On Tuesday, when he and Lucy were at school, and Bab was wishing she might go to school with them, Eddo had a new idea. It suddenly occurred to the wise baby that his friend Choo Choo must be pining to see him. He did not mention this thought; babies are good at keeping their own counsel; but when he heard his mother say she was going out to buy some buttons and twist for the dress-maker, he thought that now was his time. He knew the little street, edged with iron rails, where dear Choo Choo ran back and forth; he would go that minute and see his waiting friend.

V

EDDO AND "CHOO CHOO"

MRS. DUNLEE was to be gone only a few minutes, and it certainly seemed safe enough to leave the baby with two people to watch him: Debby Dow, who had been employed lately as nurse-girl, and Betsey, the good woman in the kitchen.

But it happened oddly enough that Debby had an attack of nose-bleed, and called out to Betsey in the pantry:—

"Won't you look after the baby a minute? I can't go near him till my nose stops bleeding. I've got a drop now on his clean dress."

And Debby ran upstairs, hardly waiting

for Betsey's reply. Betsey fully intended to take care of the baby; she was as faithful as the sun. He was in the kitchen singing to himself, the darling! She would go to him as soon as she had finished breaking the eggs for the snow-pudding. He could not go out of the house. The screen-door leading into the back yard was fastened. The grocer had called not two minutes ago with strawberries, and she had latched the door after him; she remembered it perfectly.

But for once Betsey was mistaken. The screen-door was not fastened. Baby discovered this fact for himself, slipped quietly out of the house, and ran away.

It was not for the first time. He had often tried to run away before, only he never had been able to get very far. There was always some troublesome person standing ready to run after him and bring him back.

This time, however, he seemed to have everything his own way. Hiram was out of sight in the back field, Debby upstairs bathing her nose, and Betsey in the pantry making a loud din beating the eggs.

Before Betsey had strained the lemon-juice, the enterprising baby had had five whole minutes to dance "across lots" on his gay little feet, and nobody knew he was gone. By that time his mother came home and asked at once, "Where's the baby?"

Where indeed? There was a search all over the house, all over the grounds. Debby, with a handkerchief at her nose, flew upstairs, downstairs, like one distracted; Betsey's snow-pudding was left half made, the bubbles of the beaten eggs winking in the bowl. Hiram's spade was left lying full length at the foot of a flower-bed; Lucy's new organdie skirt was thrown in a heap on

the bed. The dressmaker, Betsey, Hiram, and Mrs. Dunlee ran north, east, west, and south to look for the runaway baby.

Nobody went through the fields "across lots." Nobody — not even Hiram — remembered that there was a certain dangerous place right behind Sugar Loaf Hill, where the cars came thundering around a curve. Eddo remembered it, it seems, or perhaps it was by the merest accident that his gay little feet, almost as light as butterflies' wings, were bearing him along to that very spot. He saw the train coming, shouted for joy, and, eager to meet "Choo Choo," ran straight upon the "little street" edged with iron rails. Think of a baby on a railroad track!

It was a lonely spot where people were seldom seen. Was there nobody coming to save the crazy child?

Yes; I would not and could not write this

story if I did not know that somebody was coming to Eddo's rescue! It was not Mrs. Dunlee or Hiram or Betsey or Miss Parker; it was not Debby, who ran this way and that, "threading my grandmother's needle." But you will soon learn who it was.

"Come, little Choo Choo," called out baby to the smoking, snorting engine. "Come, little Choo Choo; Eddo won't hurt oo."

He laughed cheerily as he spoke, and the engine answered with a terrific shriek. Hiram heard it and Mrs. Dunlee and Miss Parker and Betsey and Debby. They were in different places, — north, south, east, and west; but they all heard it. They all thought at once of the lost baby, and their hearts nearly stopped beating for fear. They had not the least idea where Eddo might be; but oh, if he were anywhere near the railroad track, they could never reach him soon

enough; they were each and all too far away.

Mrs. Dunlee stood perfectly still and bowed her head. Her lips did not move, but in her heart she was speaking to our good, heavenly Father and imploring Him to save her precious child. He was answering her even while she spoke.

As I have told you, the railroad track made a curve in the middle of the field at a rather wild and lonely place. But for a wonder there was a man on the spot to-day — Mr. Marshall. He had never been there before. He was a young artist, who had come out with his easel to sit by the roadside and paint the distant view of the grand old hills and the river. He was making a beautiful picture, and was so absorbed in his work that he did not see the baby or know it was there till he heard it laugh. Then he looked

up and saw, to his horror, that a child was on the track waving its tiny arms and saying cheerily, "Come here, little Choo Choo; Eddo won't hurt oo!"

And the engine was coming; it was almost there!

Mr. Marshall sprang to his feet, threw down his palette and paint-brushes, — he did not care what became of them, — and ran with lightning speed, caught up the baby and whisked him off the track.

Just in time! The blind and heartless engine stalked right along, neither knowing nor caring what stood in its way. It would have run over a precious baby as coolly as it would have crushed a fly.

Mr. Marshall was devoutly thankful that he had been able to get there in time. But what do you imagine that unaccountable baby did by way of thanks? He set up a deafen-

ing shriek and pulled the young man's hair with all his might. He had not been afraid of the furious engine tearing along in his path, but he was wildly afraid of the kind person who had saved his life.

Mr. Marshall was not in the least offended by this singular behavior. He only laughed and kissed the ungrateful baby.

"There, there, my little man! Don't you know who your friends are?" said he, trying to withdraw the cruel little fingers from his hair.

And then he walked off with Eddo, hoping to meet some one who would recognize the baby and tell him where it lived. Hiram was a few rods off, coming toward them. He had been running at the top of his speed ever since hearing the whistle, and was soon face to face with Mr. Marshall. "Oh, Hi-*yum!*" exclaimed Eddo, escaping from the

enemy's arms and making a flying dash for his old friend.

"So you've been hunting for this baby?" said Mr. Marshall.

Hiram could hardly answer for want of breath. He caught up Eddo and hugged him, at the same time wiping his own eyes on his coat-sleeve. If he were trying to brush off the tears, it was no one's affair but his own. Betsey always said Hiram was "very easy to cry."

"He ran on to the railroad track," said Mr. Marshall.

"Just what I was afraid of," said Hiram, finding his voice. "And I knew I couldn't get there in time to save him. Look here, young man, won't you come along with me and see the baby's mother? If she ain't glad of the chance to thank you, I miss my guess."

Mr. Marshall went with Hiram. On the

way they met Mrs. Dunlee, who had been in such an agony of suspense that now the sight of her truant baby alive and well was almost more than she could bear.

"I tell you 'twas awful," said Lucy afterward to Bab. "Eddo 'most got killed, and you ought to have seen Jimmy cry. But mamma told him he didn't mean to be naughty. She said he only made a mistake.

"No, Jimmy didn't mean to be naughty, Bab; but I hope he won't do so again! We were all so glad Eddo was alive; but O my, how we cried! And there wasn't a speck of snow-pudding for dinner. And now how'll we keep Eddo away from the engines? That's what mamma says."

This was a grave question talked of in the family for days. Hiram tried to undo the mischief which Jimmy had caused; and after many lessons, Eddo was taught at last to

hold a safe and sensible opinion of steam-engines. He neither loved nor feared them any more. He learned that they are very busy fellows and can't stop to chat with little boys. Also when they puff and scream they are only trying to tell people to get off the track.

"Choo Choo, no 'top to talk," said Eddo.

He no longer cared about the noisy things, and only looked at them with polite indifference when they screamed, or rang their bells.

Meanwhile Bab was ready to go to school. She called on Wednesday morning bright and early for Lucy. Jimmy was very busy wheeling off an old barrel, and did not turn his head to look at her.

"It's that fountain thing," said Lucy. "The pipe-stems won't gush up, you see, they gush *down!*"

Jimmy was ashamed of his failure; but the

wee auntie and her niece cared very little just then for flower-beds or fountains. They were going to school together, and the world that opened before them was a perfect garden of delight.

VI

PUSSY'S NECKLACE

WHEN they entered the schoolhouse together, the teacher was already there, but it was not quite time for school to begin.

"Think of us not sitting together," said Lucy. "Chums like you and me, Bab!"

"I know it, auntie; it's just dreadful."

Sadie Morse had not come yet. Lucy stood in the doorway and looked down the street, but she was not in sight.

"Now, Bab, I'll tell you what I'm going to do," declared Lucy resolutely. "I'm going to ask the teacher to let me change my seat, and sit with you!"

"I shouldn't think you'd dare; *I* shouldn't

dare," said Bab in surprise, though she looked very much pleased.

"Well, Bab Hale, you come with me and *see* 'f I don't dare!"

The little girls went up to the teacher's desk hand in hand, Bab drawing back a little, for she could not bear to think of getting Lucy into any sort of trouble, just for her sake. Lucy, to say the truth, was rather afraid of Miss Pepper, partly on account of her sharp name, but more especially on account of her sharp nose and her black-bowed spectacles.

Miss Pepper stared a little as the children approached her. If she had only smiled, — just a tiny smile, — it would have made it much easier for them; but that was not Miss Pepper's way; she seldom smiled. Perhaps she thought a teacher ought to look rather stern.

"Well, children, what do you want?" said she, with her hand on the bell.

What Lucy wanted most just then, was to run away! But what would Bab think of such cowardice? So she gathered courage and spoke up quite boldly.

"If you please, Miss Pepper, this is Barbara C. Hale; lives up on the hill. Came from Plaster o' " —

Here Bab gave Lucy's hand a little pinch, and Lucy corrected herself hastily.

"Came from Paris in a ship."

"Yes, I know all that," said Miss Pepper, looking down on Bab as seriously as if she thought it very wrong to come in a ship.

"And Barbara's teachers didn't know how to talk anything but just French words; and her mamma wants me to *splain* things to her, and show her how to get her lessons."

"What, *you!*" Miss Pepper looked more serious than ever. Lucy felt no bigger than a fly; but she went right on:—

"And mayn't we sit together, Miss Pepper? 'Cause I'm trying to be an auntie to her. She never had an auntie in her life!"

Miss Pepper gazed steadily at the eager little face raised to hers; and if she felt at all amused at the idea of so young an aunt, she did not seem amused.

"Yes," said she slowly, "you may sit together if you won't whisper. Now remember the conditions."

And then she rang the bell.

The little girls chose the third seat near a window — and took it in a tremor of delight. It was no privation not to whisper; they were allowed to use a slate. This was happiness, and the birds in the trees seemed to be singing just to show how glad they

were to see two little girls sitting side by side who "loved each other so."

When Sadie Morse came in she looked around with astonishment and shook her head disapprovingly at Lucy, who wrote on her slate to Bab, —

"I gess she wishes now she had not shook Feby Dough!"

On going out to their classes it was a surprise to Lucy to find that her niece read better than the other children, and recited her lessons without any mistakes. Where had she learned so much without going to school? Really you wouldn't have known she had ever been in France!

The scholars all looked at Barbara with respect, for she was very sweet, and did not appear to think that she knew more than anybody else. Still, Sadie Morse could not understand why Lucy Dunlee should have

chosen her all in a minute for a chum. If Lucy had chosen Sadie, it would have been the proper thing to do, so Sadie thought.

Never before had there been a friendship in that white schoolhouse like the friendship of Lucy Dunlee and Barbara Hale. It seemed to glorify the whole room. Phebe Dow's sober little face, which had been brightening ever since Lucy came to town, became positively sunny. She found that Bab was just as kind as Lucy; so the poor lame child could count on two friends now, instead of one.

The scholars thought it rather odd at first to hear this new girl call wee Lucy her auntie; but they soon became accustomed to it, and began to think of Lucy as a "truly auntie" to Bab.

One Saturday morning, as the two friends were playing on the Hale lawn, Mrs. Hale came out to meet them.

"Good morning, wee Lucy," said she. "I've just seen your mamma, and she hopes you've not forgotten your music lesson."

"No'm, I didn't forget it *much*. I 'member it now," stammered Lucy.

"Well, go take it now, and then you may come here to luncheon, so your mamma says."

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Hale. Mayn't Bab go too?"

The children trudged off together, their arms about each other's waists.

"Miss Snell," said Lucy, when they arrived at the music-teacher's house; "good morning, Miss Snell. I've brought my little niece; her name is Barbara C. Hale."

"Your *what?*" said Miss Snell; and, unlike Miss Pepper, she smiled. But, seeing how serious the children looked, she added: "Ah, Miss Lucy, you never told me before

that you had a niece. I am happy to make her acquaintance."

And as a favor she allowed Bab to sit in the music-room and hear Lucy make mistakes on the piano. The truth was, Barbara herself could play far better than Lucy, though she did not know it. She thought the piano was surprisingly out of tune.

"Don't you hate to take lessons?" said Lucy, as they left the house.

"No, I like it ever so much. I take 'em on a piano that doesn't make a bit o' noise; it's a dumb piano."

Lucy had never heard of such an instrument before. She knew there was a "dumb waiter" in Bab's house; but a "dumb piano," what was that?

"Folks that come from France have a lot of queer things," said she. "A deaf and dumb piano! Well, there!"

They found Mrs. Hale in the sewing-room, all alone; for her husband had gone out of town.

"I'm very glad to see my daughter's auntie and my daughter too," said she, kissing them both. "Now tell me how you are getting on at school. Does my little girl make you a great deal of trouble, Aunt Lucy?"

Lucy considered a moment. She wished to tell Bab's mother the strict truth.

"Not so very much," said she. "She knows *nearly* everything; only there are *some* things she doesn't know."

"Is it possible? What can they be, I wonder?"

"Well, when the teacher talks to us to sit up straight and pay 'tention, Bab thinks she says '*Cigarette*,' but she doesn't at all; she says '*Sit erect*.' I had to tell Bab about that."

"I'm glad you did. I see you try to be a good auntie to my little daughter."

"Yes, mamma, she does," said Bab. "We love each other dearly; and if she has a secret she's going to tell it to me, and if I have a secret I'm going to tell it to her; we've promised."

"You're willing, aren't you, Mrs. Hale?" asked Lucy.

"Oh, perfectly, perfectly, you dear little goosies!"

And Mrs. Hale placed one arm around each little girl and led the way to the dining-room.

Lucy had never been in it but once before, and then only to look at the handsome pictures on the walls. It was a grand room, for Colonel Hale's house was the finest one in town.

There was a man to wait on table, not a

Chinaman like those Lucy had seen in California. His name was Blackwell. He served cold chicken from the sideboard, but went into the closet for hot gravy and vegetables. Lucy knew the reason. She had learned that these things were sent up from the kitchen on a "dumb waiter," though she had never been able to find out why the waiter was dumb.

"Children," said Mrs. Hale in a low tone, as Blackwell disappeared in the closet. "Speaking of secrets, I have a secret myself and I'll tell it to you. Papa and I intend to go to California next fall."

"Oh, mamma, mamma," cried Bab, "mayn't I go too?"

"To be sure. We'll have to take our onydony girl!"

Here Lucy, who sat beside Bab, began to embrace her with both arms. "My darling

Bab, oh, won't we be so happy if you can live in California right side o' me?"

"'Twill be too sweet for anything," replied Bab, returning the embrace. "But where'll grandpa be, mamma?"

"With us, my darling. Indeed, it's for your grandpa's sake we're going; you know he coughs sometimes."

At that moment Blackwell came back, and both the little girls tried to draw down their faces to a proper length; but it was hard work to keep this delightful secret and eat luncheon at the same time. Lucy choked a little in attempting to drink water without fairly opening her mouth.

Presently Blackwell retired to the closet again, and they heard him laughing all by himself. What could have happened? He did not come out for some moments, and when he did come he did not bring the tea-

pot and the waffles which Mrs. Hale had expected. Instead he brought something quite different, — something which people do not generally place on a dining table. It was the gray cat! Mrs. Hale said, "Why, Blackwell!" Barbara said, "Why, Tippytoes!" And then she and Lucy both laughed.

But Blackwell had no idea of putting the animal on the dining table. He was only holding up Tippytoes to show what she had on her neck. It was a piece of pink ribbon tied in a bow-knot. A note was fastened to the ribbon and hung down in plain sight.

"Take it off, Blackwell," said Mrs. Hale. "I don't know what it is, do you? Is it for either of these little girls?"

The cat winked knowingly as the man untied the ribbon and took off the note. He looked hard at the address to make very sure; then gave the note to Barbara.

"To me! To me!" cried the little girl. "It's to me on the outside, and it's to me on the inside; and it's printed with a typewriter!"

She read the note aloud in high glee. "'If Miss Barbara C. Hale and her respected little aunt'—that means you, Auntie Lucy!—'If Miss Barbara C. Hale and her respected little aunt will call at the railroad station this afternoon at three o'clock, they may meet with a very pleasant surprise.'"

"Why-ee!" cried Bab.

"O my!" cried Lucy.

"Another secret," said Mrs. Hale.

"Let's go this minute, Bab."

"No use, Auntie Lucy, it says three o'clock. We'll have to wait."

"Let *me* see, Bab! Yes, it *is* three o'clock. O dear!"

Mrs. Hale asked Blackwell to take the

little girls to the station at the proper time, and he readily consented, being nearly as curious as they were to learn what it meant. Somebody must have given the note to the cook to tie on Tippytoes's neck, but he did not know who it was.

"I've heard of carrier-pigeons," said Mrs. Hale, "but a carrier-cat is rather new. Come, children, let us eat our waffles while they are hot. 'Twill be some time before you can meet with your pleasant surprise."

VII

CAPTAIN KIDD

THE wee auntie and her small niece were met at the station by one of the village boys, Jack Groves.

"What have you got there?" asked Blackwell, for the boy had a large covered basket in his hand.

"That's telling," said Jack. He lifted the cover of the basket, and out sprang a beautiful little animal, which the girls thought at first was a brown dog.

No, not a dog, for it trotted about the platform on shiny black feet as hard as horns.

"Why," said Bab, "it's a little kid!" And

then she knew at once that a kid was what she had always wanted most.

"What a darling beauty! He won't bite, will he?"

"Yes, bites like anything."

The children drew back in alarm.

"I mean bites grass — or will when he's old enough," laughed Jack.

"Tame as a kitten," said Blackwell. "Where did he come from?"

"From York state, somewhere. A man brought him to Boston, and I had orders to go to Boston and fetch him the rest of the way."

"But who sent him?"

"Colonel Hale."

"Oh, my grandpa, my grandpa!" cried Bab, kneeling down and laying her cheek close to the pretty kid's face. She could never, never be afraid of anything her dear grandpapa had sent.

It seemed that Jack had written the note to Bab; and Katrina, the cook, had tied the note on pussy's neck, making a "carrier-cat" of Tippytoes.

"Your grandpa found the kid in an old woman's lap," said Jack. "She was feeding him from a bottle, like a baby. Your grandpa bought the kid and carried him off, bottle and all."

Here Jack took a bottle out of the basket and waved it aloft.

"Come and get it, old fellow!"

The little creature leaped up on his shiny black feet and caught the neck of the bottle in his mouth, to the great amusement of the little girls.

"How I do wish he was mine!" said Lucy.

"Why, he is yours, auntie. You'll have half of him. Don't you know we're always going to live together?"

"So we are; your grandpa too. Oh, aren't we happy?"

Mrs. Hale was delighted to see the kid trotting into the house. She was as fond of animals as the children. "You've brought me a pleasant surprise indeed, little girls. Brava! Bravissima!"

She took the bottle into the kitchen and gave orders that it should be kept very clean and filled often with new milk. It might be well to warm the milk at first, she said.

"Oh, Mrs. Hale," said Lucy, watching the kid's gambols, "if we should try to feed him with a teaspoon, would it be — do you think 'twould be —improper?"

"No," laughed Mrs. Hale. "Wait till to-morrow though, and take an iron spoon."

The first thing to do was to find a suitable name for the little beastie.

"Let's name him for Captain Kidd," suggested Lucy.

"Who is that?"

"Why, Bab Hale, didn't you ever hear of Captain Kidd, the pirate man?"

Bab reflected a moment.

"I don't believe I ever"—

Lucy's lip curled just a little. She forgot that only a month ago she herself had never heard of the man, and she pitied Bab for her ignorance.

"Folks off to Plaster o' Paris, where you came from, don't know quite so very much; do they, Bab?"

"What makes you say Plaster o' Paris?" retorted the small niece, curling her own lip in her turn. "There's no plaster to it, it's just Paris! I've told you so three times."

"Well, Paris then. I meant just Paris. But this pirate man"—

"What is a pirate man?" interrupted Bab.

"A pirate man? Ahem! Well, that's the name they call 'em by. They go sailing 'round and 'round, and find all the gold there is."

"Oh," said Bab, quite satisfied.

"Well, Captain Kidd digged lots of holes in this country and filled 'em full of gold, all solid full."

"What for?"

"I don't know; only that's the way they act. He digged holes all 'round everywhere; he came to this town and digged 'em" —

"Did he fill 'em all with gold?"

"Yes, solid full."

"Now that's a fairy story," commented Bab, "or else he's crazy."

It was some time before she consented to name the new pet for the "crazy captain"; but Hiram settled the question by remarking that it might "bring them good luck."

Captain Kidd was made to wear a red, white, and blue ribbon round his neck in honor of his country, and sometimes a tiny flag above each ear, only the flags always dropped off immediately. He was a delightful little playmate, and made some progress in learning the use of a spoon.

"He shall come to my party, so he shall," said Lucy, patting his cheeks.

"Why, Auntie Lucy, I never knew you were going to have a party."

"Nor I either, Bab." Lucy spoke in a low tone, though Katrina was in the pantry and they were alone in the kitchen. "Mamma didn't say certainly, she only said perhaps."

"Who'll you invite?" said Bab, as she stirred the kid's milk on the stove.

"I've been thinking about that. I'll have Phebe Dow anyway, 'cause she never went to a party. The girls don't ask her."

"Now, Auntie Lucy, why don't they ask her?"

"Well, you know Phebe's clothes are horrid."

"The girls ought to be 'shamed," cried Bab, waving the spoon in air; "clothes isn't anything."

"And then she can't play much," added Lucy; "lame folks can't."

"They couldn't play much themselves if their backs were all crooked up. How'd they like *that?*" cried Bab indignantly. "They ought to be 'shamed!"

"What now?" said Katrina, rushing in as she smelt the odor of burnt milk. "Seems to me you younglings might let my milk-pans alone."

And as she scrubbed the stove she chanted good-naturedly: —

"Little Dutch Gretchen sat in the kitchen,
Eating some nice sour-krout;
Her little dog Schneider came and sat down beside her
And little Dutch Gretchen went out."

"His name isn't Snider," corrected Bab; "but if he'll only learn to drink milk before his grandpa comes, we'll be perfickly happy. Are you cooking something nice, Katrina? 'Cause my Auntie Lucy's going to stay to dinner."

"Then you'd better run away, younglings, so as not to get a sight of what I'm making. It's something queer, and nobody shall eat it but the folks that know how to read."

"Alphabet soup!" exclaimed Bab, as they sat down to table; and dipping in her spoon she showed Lucy that the soup was full of white letters, A, B, C, etc.

Mrs. Hale said the letters were cut out of maccaroni.

"Do you think alphabet soup would be nice for my party?" asked Lucy, as she was leaving for home.

"Splendid!" said Bab.

"Maybe I can't have the party. Don't tell anybody, Bab — not yet."

"Why, we've got a secret," exclaimed the little niece; "true's you live, this is a secret!"

And so it was, though a very tiny one, to be sure. Not much like the big, "truly" secret the little girls were to share in a few days. But they knew nothing as yet about that!

VIII

A VIOLET TEA-PARTY

"PLEASE, mamma, if I'll be good, will you let me have it?" asked wee Lucy, dancing about on one foot.

"Have what?" asked mamma.

"Oh, I mean the May-party. You know you said I might have it sometime. Isn't it sometime now?"

"Well, it is Saturday, my dear, and the day is fine. If it were not for my headache" —

"Oh, mamma, mamma, I didn't know you had any, I didn't! Will you let me bathe it with hot water? And maybe," added Lucy, hesitating, "couldn't you take a pill? You know folks do sometimes."

Mrs. Dunlee smiled and kissed the little pleader.

"I think I do not need a pill, dear. It is not a bad headache; and if it should be better after dinner, there will be time enough then for you to invite the little girls; but I cannot let you do it now. Will you be patient and wait?"

Lucy looked at her mother's pale face; then she looked out of the window at the lovely blue sky. Such a day for a party!

"I'll try to be patient; only I don't know what patient *quite* means, mamma."

"It is not to tease, darling. If you don't say another word about it, if you don't even speak the word 'party' till dinner time, then I shall call you a patient little girl."

"Then I'd better go right off," thought Lucy. "The words keep coming out of my lips just as fast!"

Betsey was rolling pie-crust in the pantry. Lucy went and stood at her elbow and watched her as the rolling-pin flattened the dough.

"I think some little bits o' pies would be nice for a — for a — Don't you know, Betsey, little girls like 'em? I mean tarts, small, round, 'bout as big as cookies."

"I know one little girl that likes 'em," said Betsey. "If you say so, I'll cut out two tarts for Lucy Dunlee."

"O thank you, Betsey. Can't you cut more? Let me see, five, six, seven tarts. No, they'll want two apiece; there'll be much as six girls."

Betsey looked over her left shoulder at Lucy. "What are you talking about, child? Six girls coming here? When?"

"Don't ask me, please don't, Betsey," said Lucy, laying her finger on her lip. "I mustn't talk, I'm trying to be patient."

"What has the young one got in her head now?" thought the good Betsey, taking up a buttered plate and covering it with the thin dough. She knew she had only to wait, and she should soon learn what Lucy was thinking about.

"Do you feel well to-day, Betsey?"

"Yes; I'm 'most always well, except my rheumatiz."

"And grandma says she feels well, too. She says she don't 'member's she ever felt any better. I s'pose she means since she was a little girl."

"Yes, that's probably what she means," said Betsey, shaking her plump sides a little, as she pared the edges of the dough.

"And mamma's headache isn't so very bad," went on Lucy. "I asked her if she wanted a pill, and she said she didn't. She said she hoped she'd feel better after dinner. And

'twill be time enough then to ask the girls to my — my " —

" Your what? "

" I don't want to talk about it at all, Betsey. I'm trying to be patient. But *do* you s'pose we could have it outdoors and set the table under the trees? "

" I could answer you better if I knew what you're talking about," said Betsey, pretending not to understand.

" Well, it's seven girls; *that* isn't much of a — I'm not going to speak the word, Betsey! But you do make the nicest seed-cakes out o' carry-away. I never ate any but yours. And once you made some cream candy; don't you 'member? "

" Well, what if I did? Is that a sign I'll ever make any more? "

Lucy was silent for half a minute. " I didn't know but you might make *something*

nice, Betsey. Don't you think I'm a pretty good little girl?"

Betsey wanted to say, "You're a darling, and the best brought-up child I ever saw." But she did not believe in praising children too much; so she only said, —

"I've seen worse little girls than you are, Lucy." Then, after reflecting awhile: "I might make you some cake and put whipped cream in the middle and on top. I might make lots of nice things, Lucy; only 'twould be kind of curious to go to work and make 'em when you don't tell me what for!"

Lucy gazed at Betsey anxiously. This was getting serious. Was she about to lose "lots of nice things" merely because she would not speak the word "party"?

"But mamma told me not to," thought the dear little girl. "I have to mind my mamma, anyway."

Betsey was already cutting out tarts with the biscuit cutter.

"Why, you're doing it! One, two, three, four, five. Why, how fast you cut 'em!"

"Can you eat ten?" asked Betsey. "Perhaps I'd better make a dozen while I'm about it."

Grandma Parlin came into the pantry at that moment.

"Have you got the pies done, Betsey?" she asked.

And by the nods and other signs that she made behind Lucy's back, Betsey saw that more baking was to be done. Grandma pointed to the square tin with slides; and Betsey knew she was expected to fill it with some of her very best cake. Grandma pointed to the porcelain preserve-kettle, and that meant that it was wanted for candy. Betsey had lived with Grandma Parlin for

thirty years, and understood her wishes without many words.

So when Lucy had been sent to hunt for eggs, there was a busy time in the pantry and kitchen. And Lucy knew nothing about it, for she and Bab were playing hide-and-seek in the barn.

"I can be a great deal patienter out here than I can in the house," said Lucy.

Noon came at last, — the hour when the Parlins always dined. Mrs. Dunlee was well enough to come to the table and eat some toast and drink a cup of tea. Lucy watched every mouthful with interest, and never once said the word that was almost on her lips, — "party." Mamma felt proud of her.

"You have been my good girl," said she; "and now, as my head is better, you may go and invite your little friends to tea. I shall not mind a quiet little party."

"Oh, mamma, mamma, mamma!" cried Lucy, and danced away without eating her lemon pie.

As the little girls she wished to ask lived very near, she was not gone long. At three o'clock they had all arrived at the tea-party, — even Phebe Dow, who had farthest to come and walked so slowly on crutches.

It was a very fine afternoon. Aunt Vi attended to everything. She and Betsey set the table on the piazza, and placed a bowl of violets in the middle of the table and a bunch of violets at each little girl's plate; so that it really turned out, you see, to be a violet tea.

But they had something to eat besides flowers, I hope! Little hot muffins and cold chicken; and what looked like cream cakes, only there was real ice-cream inside the cakes for a delicious surprise! And best of all, some candy, made of nuts and maple sugar

and cream, the very candy that Betsey was famous for making.

Captain Kidd nibbled whatever was given him, and the girls clapped their hands to see him sip milk from a teaspoon.

"I 'know his grandpa'll be pleased," said Bab with great pride.

While the children were eating and mamma was waiting on table, Aunt Vi sat on one of the piazza steps and played the "Song of the Fairies."

"By the moon we sport and play;
With the night begins our day;
As we dance the dew doth fall;
Trip it, little urchins all.
Lightly as the little bee,
Two by two, and three by three;
And about go we, and about go we."

Mamma had spoken of a "quiet little party," and indeed the guests were still enough at table; but after tea, when they

went into the back parlor all by themselves, there was an end to the quiet. They were so happy that they all wanted to talk at once; Phebe Dow was positively gay, and Lucy could not help dancing as she whispered to Bab, —

'Aren't you glad I was patient?"

"I never was so glad of anything, Auntie Lucy! If you'd teased we shouldn't have had this party."

The girls talked every minute, and mostly about May-baskets; for it was the fashion in Willowbrook to hang them all through the month of May. Bab had wondered for days if anybody would ever hang one for her. Aunt Vi had just decided that somebody would, and that the May-basket would contain among other things a box of the very best caramel candy, made of cream and nuts and maple sugar.

"Bless the darling," thought Aunt Vi; "the sweetest child in this town, excepting our Lucy!"

While the children were chatting and laughing the door-bell rang. If they had not been thinking of May-baskets, they would not have noticed the ring; as it was, they had been waiting for it, expecting to hear it. A May-basket, of course; a May-basket for Lucy. Who could imagine that the door-bell would ring for anything else?

"Quick! Quick!" the girls cried. There was no time to lose. Whoever had hung the basket would get away out of sight, if somebody didn't fly to the door instantly to see who it was.

They almost tumbled over one another in their haste; and Phebe Dow, with her crutches, had to keep out of the way. Captain Kidd arrived first at the door, the girls close behind

him, every one of them except Phebe. Lucy opened the door while they all shouted in chorus, "Oh! Oh! Oh! We've caught you, we've caught you!" without waiting to see who was caught, or what he was caught doing.

But when they saw who stood there, — not some playful children in the act of hanging a May-basket, — no indeed, — but a grown-up man, a very astonished man, who merely wanted to be let in, they were dreadfully ashamed! So ashamed that they cried out again in a different tone, though just as loud, "Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Think of eight girls screaming like that all at once! Wasn't it enough to frighten anybody, unless he had the courage of a lion? The man did not know what to make of it. Were these children all crazy? Or did they think the house was on fire?

He never stopped for any questions, but

turned and walked off as fast as possible to get away from the noise.

Who could it have been? A perfect stranger, the girls thought; though how could they tell? They had not had time to get a fair look at him.

"It might have been my old friend, Deacon Fales," said grandpa. "He sent word he should call soon. But if it was the deacon, he'll never dare come again, that's certain."

And grandpa rubbed his hands and laughed. It *was* a droll thing for eight little girls and a tame kid to fly in a man's face in that way, and scare him out of his wits!

The bell rang again. This time the little girls huddled together in a corner and left Betsey to go to the door; but she was so long about it that Jack Groves was quite out of sight and hearing before it was discovered

that there was a beautiful May-basket hung on the door-knob. "For Miss Lucy Dunlee," with a bunch of the pinkest May-flowers, and two slices of angel-cake in a Japanese napkin.

But who was the man who had been frightened away?

Grandpa was right; it *was* Deacon Fales, and he had come to speak of something very pleasant. If the children had known just what it was, they would have thought no more about May-baskets, and their "Oh, oh's" would have rung out again in joyful chorus.

IX

A DEAR LITTLE SECRET

WOULDN'T you think it was better than May-baskets to see the whole town out on a parade?

This was what Deacon Fales had come to talk about to grandpa, when the girls frightened him away. This fine parade was what was going to happen, and it was what did happen two days after the May-party.

You remember that Bab's grandfather, Colonel Hale, was coming to Willowbrook?

Yes, but you did not know that he was a great man. All the village was proud of him. Everybody loved him. He had given the organ for the church; he had built the

white schoolhouse. For two years he had been away from Willowbrook, and the people were very glad he was coming back. To show him that they were glad, they wanted to make this grand festival.

They draped his house — the one where Bab lived — with bunting and flags. They hung all the tall trees on the lawn with Chinese lanterns. They stretched a rope of flowers all the way from the house to the post-office. They made a great arch with the words on it in gilt letters: "Welcome Home."

The moment the cars got in, the brass band began to play, "The Conquering Hero Comes." Colonel Hale could not think at first what it meant. When he stepped out on the platform and saw the crowds of people and knew they had come on purpose to greet him, — the old soldier, — he took off his

hat and bowed, and smiled, and waved his hand. There were tears in his eyes, but I think they were happy tears.

The music ceased awhile, and he made a little speech, after which the people cheered him, and called him the "brave colonel" and said "Honor to Colonel Hale." And then two men escorted him to a fine carriage, and he rode home with Mr. and Mrs. Hale and Bab and Lucy — for of course Lucy was there, — and the band played all the way.

The wee auntie and the little niece had wreaths of flowers on their heads, and looked and felt as proud as two little May-queens. If the parade had been made for them, they could not have felt any prouder.

There was a grand supper on the lawn under the trees, and Mrs. Dunlee and Mrs. Hale had taken care that Phebe Dow should be there, crutches and all. After the supper

there were splendid fireworks. Bab sat on one of Colonel Hale's knees and Lucy on the other, and they gazed and gazed, and clapped and clapped till they couldn't keep their eyes open another minute; and then somebody carried them off and put them to bed.

But it had been a brilliant festival, and they had been part of it, and it was something they would never forget as long as they lived.

Next day Lucy called to see Bab, and they walked about the lawn talking it over, while Captain Kidd followed like a little dog. Bab carried in her arms her grandpa's gift — a new waxen doll nearly as large as herself. It could cry, "just as natural," and say "papa" and "mamma," as if in distress; so it was certainly not a dumb doll, whatever might be said of the waiter and the piano.

Bab had decided to call her Columbella if Lucy liked the name, and Lucy said nothing could be better.

"Only think, when grandpa saw Columbella in the shop-window she had a little bird on her hat! Grandpa told the man to take it off quicker'n he could wink! *Wouldn't* I be 'shamed of you, Columbella Hale, wearing a bird?"

"We'd both be 'shamed of you, Columbella Hale," said Lucy. "We love birdies, and don't 'low our children to wear 'em; we're not *that* kind of folks!"

"There, there, you're hurting her feelings, Auntie Lucy. See how she blushes! *You* couldn't help it, Columbella dear. 'Twas the naughty man made you wear it."

"Yes, 'twas the naûghty man," echoed Lucy; "we forgive you, Columbella."

Lucy had a great admiration for Colonel

Hale. He was very good and very handsome, and she wished he belonged to her. Bab did not stop to think that Lucy had three grandpas already, while she had but one, and said in a moment, —

"Well, you may have half of him."

When Grandpa Hale heard of this, he said it would have been just like Bab to give him all away; he was glad she had saved part for herself.

But now we are coming to a point of great interest for our little heroines. The next afternoon Lucy came home from school later than usual, looking quite excited. No one observed this, for every one was busy. She must write in her diary at once; she could not wait. She ran to the desk, took out the book, and wrote under the proper date, Wednesday: —

"I have a secret. It is mine, but Highrum [Hiram] was there. I had to tell him. I

shall not tell Jimmy. Highrum says what a brave girl you are. Oh, I want to tell Bab. It is a dear little secret. It will make Bab so happy."

It was a new secret, half an hour old, but she was longing to tell it to somebody. Not to Jimmy. There were strong reasons against confiding in Jimmy, and Hiram had advised her not to do it. Mamma, then? No, it was best to keep it from mamma for a little while in order to give her later a joyful surprise.

O dear, she wanted to see Bab; but she couldn't see her to-night; mamma said it was too late. But *could* she wait till to-morrow? It did not seem possible.

She went to school next morning as early as she was permitted to go. Bab had not arrived.

"You were almost late," said Lucy, as they went to their seats. Bab explained calmly

that she had been obliged to do an errand. She did not know why Lucy should care particularly that morning, any more than other mornings, about her being late. The wee auntie waited till after the morning reading, then wrote on the slate, —

"A dear little secret! ! !"

Bab's brown eyes opened very wide. Three exclamation points all in a row were very startling.

"I kno sumthing to tell," went on Lucy, as fast as her fingers could write. When in haste her spelling was always wild, but Bab never criticised.

"Highrum noes it. Nobody knose it but me and Hierum."

"Oh, Auntie Lucy," Bab wrote back, "when did you know it?"

"New it yistedy. I will tell you, but you mus not tel long as you live."

"No, I said I never would. But what is it? What is it?"

"It is a deer little seecrit. I have hid it. Highrum told me to. Come after scoohl and I will show you."

Bab almost gave a little squeal of delight. Here was the secret at last, the long-looked-for secret. But it seemed that it was something that could not be told, it had to be seen. Lucy was unable to describe it. She tried once or twice, then dropped the slate-pencil in despair. At recess it was no better. "I can't splain it," she whispered. "It is something I found, and 'twill make you just as happy! But it's down on the bank, and we can't go to see it till school's out."

"Deary me!" said Bab, suddenly recollecting that her mother had bidden her to come home without delay at noon. It seemed hard, but both the little girls had been trained to

strict obedience, and I am happy to say that neither of them thought of such a thing as going down to the bank that morning.

"Don't you hate to be patient?" said Bab.

"Yes, I do," replied Lucy, stamping her foot just a little. "Now you know how I felt before I had my party. When you are very, very patient you can't talk about things. I like to talk about 'em, don't you?"

But when the afternoon school was out Lucy said merrily, —

"Now come with me, Bab, come with me, and I will show you."

X

"WHAT FOR?"

BARBARA followed Lucy down the river-bank, very curious as to the wonders that were to be revealed.

"You know what I said about Captain Kidd, Bab?"

"Yes, you always said he was a darling, and you wished he was yours."

"Oh, I don't mean *our* Captain Kidd! I'm talking about a man, a pirate man."

"Oh, now I 'member; yes, indeed. He was crazy and went 'round planting gold in the ground; I s'pose he thought 'twould grow."

"I don't know what he thought," said Lucy. "But," pausing and waving her arms like a windmill, "he sailed up here, Captain

Kidd did, up this river. He hid some of that gold right here — on — this — bank!"

"Why, Aunt Lucy Dunlee!"

"Yes, truly; don't you believe what I say?"

"Oh, I believe what you say; only maybe you made a mistake," answered Bab, trying to be very courteous. She did not like to hurt her auntie's feelings; but at the bottom of her heart she wondered why she should tell such a fairy story.

"How could I make a mistake," returned Lucy with spirit, "how could I make a mistake when I found 'em myself, and Hiram said 'twas the same ones?"

"Found what?"

"Some of Captain Kidd's gold! Not 'zac'ly gold, it's goldy *stones*. You have to crack it to get it out."

"Well there, Auntie Lucy! Did you find 'em yourself?"

This began to sound more like something real!

"Yes, found 'em my own self. I went fishing with Hiram; he said I might if I wouldn't talk and scare the fishes."

"Won't he let me go too?"

"I'll ask him. I didn't talk a word. I had my little hoe in my hand; and bimeby while Hiram was fishing I poked in the grass and roots 'way down deep; and oh, how it did shine!"

"What, the hoe?"

"No, no, the *things*, the gold stones! And they shined a good deal more when I got 'em clean. I washed 'em in the river before I showed 'em to Hiram."

"Deary me! Did Hiram *say* Captain Kidd put 'em there?" cried Bab, her heart beating high.

"Yes! He said Captain Kidd was a queer

man, 'a '*countable* man,' coming up to this town in the night when folks were asleep, and hiding things that way! And he said there wouldn't anybody have found 'em but a little girl that had a little sharp hoe just like mine, kind o' pick-ed at the end."

"I know," said Bab, "your hoe is queer and just as sharp! Where did you dig?"

"'Twas down there a little further. We haven't got there yet. 'Twas pretty near that brown house."

There was a small brown cottage under the shade of the willow trees. It had never been painted at all, but the sunshine and the rains had stained it a sort of dirty brown.

"There, I put 'em in this old house. Hiram told me to. There isn't anybody lives here, and never did."

The door stood open. You could see that there were two rooms in the house, but only

one outside door. There was an old table in the front room and two chairs, each chair having only three legs. Lucy walked into the house.

"Come, Bab, here's where I put 'em. I hid 'em right in that closet."

"*What for?*" asked a voice.

Not Bab's voice. Bab was close behind Lucy, creeping along very quietly. Lucy looked all around in astonishment. There was no one to be seen.

"Jimmy, Jimmy, what made you come?" cried Lucy.

He did not answer.

"Let's go find him," said Lucy, and she caught Bab by the arm and whirled her into the second room. There was an old, very old lounge in it, and a big box, but otherwise the room seemed to be empty.

"Oh, do you suppose he knows about it and

came here and hid?" whispered Lucy. "Boys do *act* so!"

"They're dreadful," responded Bab, who knew very little about boys except what she had heard their sisters say.

"Did you put 'em in that closet, auntie?"

"Yes, but I don't dare look in. There may be a mouse in there, or a — a something," whispered Lucy.

She hardly knew why, but she did not like to open the closet door. She was peeping under the old table, under the three-legged chairs.

"Why, Jimmy isn't in this house, Bab! I heard him speak; didn't you?"

"Yes, he spoke, plain as could be."

They went out of the cottage and searched about under the trees and bushes; but if Jimmy was there he managed to keep out of sight; and he did not speak again.

"Maybe he's gone home now," said Lucy.

"Then let's open the closet door," urged Bab; but to her disappointment the wee auntie replied: —

"No, I'm scared of a mouse or a trap or a something. We won't open it to-day. But don't you tell anybody about it, now you 'member."

"How can I tell anybody anything when I don't see anything and don't know what it is," said the small niece sharply.

It did seem too bad to be cheated in this way; but the wee auntie would not listen to reason; she was already scrambling up the bank, and little Bab could do nothing but follow.

"I haven't seen a single thing, Auntie Lucy."

"But you will see 'em, Bab. I thought I wouldn't show 'em to you to-day. We're going to be just as rich!"

She was still gazing around anxiously.

"We'll come down here to-morrow, and then — O my, if Jimmy doesn't go there and find 'em! Where was Jimmy when he spoke?"

"Don't you s'pose, auntie, 'twas Captain Kidd, and he knew you'd got his things, and he went and hid?"

Lucy thought not. She was pretty sure the captain was dead; though she had forgotten to ask Hiram.

"'Twas a good while ago he was 'round here, before Hiram was born. I'm going to ask about it, but I 'most know the captain is dead."

"Well, then, I should think you'd scold Jimmy. It's a good deal worse than the way he acted to the baby about that engine."

"So it is, Bab. I'm going to scold him just as hard!"

"Did you scold Jimmy?" was the first

question Bab asked of Lucy next morning, as they started bright and early to make another visit to the hut.

"No, I never," replied Lucy, with a wise look. "Hiram 'vised me not to say a single word to Jimmy. Jimmy's trying to tease me, and if I don't say anything then he'll stop."

"Oh, will he?" said Bab. Brothers are very strange creatures, and she was unable to express an opinion as to the proper way of managing them.

"But is Captain Kidd dead? Does Hiram know truly he's dead?"

"Oh, yes; just as dead as can be. Hiram says he couldn't be any deader. 'Twas Jimmy that spoke. Hiram says Jimmy was hiding 'round under the trees, and of course we couldn't find him."

"I know it; I never saw such thick trees," said Bab. And then, wishing to say some-

thing consoling to Lucy, she added: "But you have *one* good brother, you know."

"Yes, Eddo's a darling," sighed Lucy. "And so's Jimmy, only when he gets to *acting*."

"Well, don't you say anything to Jimmy, and maybe he'll stop acting— Wait a minute, auntie; your hair has come loose."

Lucy stopped at once. She knew what Bab meant. She had tried several times to wear her curly hair in straight braids down her back like Bab's, which she so greatly admired, but the ribbons were always coming off.

The little girls stood by the roadside while Bab braided the curly cue over again; but it was in quite a snarl, and she had to pull the hair so hard that it almost brought tears to Lucy's eyes.

"There, I spect I hurt you," said Bab penitently.

"Oh, not *quite* so very much. You didn't mean to," replied the little sufferer sweetly, and turned and kissed Bab.

"So that's the way you pay your barber, is it, wee Lucy?" said Colonel Hale, meeting them on the street as he was walking with Bab's father.

The little girls made a pretty picture as they stood there so lovingly; but neither the grandpa or the papa observed that one of the wee auntie's braids was much tighter than the other, and the ribbon in a very hard knot.

"They don't know where we're going," said Lucy, with a happy little giggle.

"No; they don't 'spect, nor mamma either," returned Bab, proud of not having told them. "Isn't it nice to have a truly secret to keep?"

"Yes; just like grown-up ladies."

"I never kept one before but just once,"

said Bab. "Once I broke a vase and was scared and didn't want to tell mamma; but pretty soon I went and told."

"Well, you ought to," said Lucy, fond of instructing her little niece. "You ought to tell things like that. That was a wicked secret. But this one isn't wicked. You mustn't tell this one; now 'member, Bab."

"Didn't I say I wouldn't tell?" said Bab, aggrieved. "Why, I've begun to tell three or four times, and then 'membered and stopped."

"Oh, Bab, you darling! I've got nine of those goldy stones, and there's more, maybe, deep in the bank. I *hope* there's more; and when we get 'em all we'll count 'em, and you shall have just half."

"May I? You're the best auntie that ever lived! I'm so glad I found you," said Bab, much touched by this generosity.

"When we get rich, what'll we do with so much money?"

By this time they had come to the brown hut. Lucy entered first; Bab followed, speechless with curiosity.

XI

THE RED CHEST

Lucy went straight to the little cupboard, — it was a cupboard with shelves, — and opened the door.

"Oh, Jimmy hasn't touched 'em," she exclaimed. "I thought Jimmy wouldn't touch 'em."

She knelt before the cupboard door, and Bab peeped over her shoulder, though all she could see at first was an old coat on the floor. Lucy lifted one of the coat-flaps and took out something like a flat stone about as big as a man's hand, only you saw at once that it was not a common stone, for there were streaks like gold shining all through it.

"Why, I never, never, never!" cried Bab, as much excited as even the wee auntie could have desired.

"Of course you never, Bab Hale! And nobody else ever! Doesn't it look just as I said it did?"

"It does, it does; but what is it?"

"Rough gold, that's what Hiram says."

Bab passed her fingers over it caressingly. Rather rough, perhaps; and certainly unlike anything else she had ever seen.

"Hiram wishes *he'd* found it; but it's mine, and he says he won't take it, not any of it. But he'll crack it for us and get out the gold."

Here Lucy lifted the coat and displayed the entire treasure; nine pieces in all, not one missing.

"I washed 'em in the river before I put 'em in here."

"*What for?*" said some one. Jimmy of course; or that was what they both thought. But where was Jimmy? In that tiny house with two rooms there did not seem to be any place to hide.

"Oh, you bad, naughty boy, what made you do that again?"

They went out to look, but could not see him in the trees or behind the bushes. It was of no use calling to him, though they called again and again. He would not come out.

Lucy went back to the house and shut the closet door, but did not put back the "rough gold" she had shown to Bab; she still kept it in her hand.

"Oh, I wish we could take 'em all, but folks'll see us. Come, Bab, let's go right home. Will it be telling tales to tell mamma? Don't you think I ought to tell mamma?"

"Peek-a-boo," cried Jimmy mockingly, as

the little girls ran off in their wrath. They could hear him laughing behind the bushes somewhere. Oh, it was too vexing! Bab was glad she had no brothers. And Grandpa Hale had said Jimmy was a little gentleman!

"He won't take it, 'cause 'twould be stealing," said Lucy; "but he wants to hurt our feelings; that's what he wants."

"He ought to be 'shamed," declared Bab. "Let's get those goldy stones out o' that cupboard quick! Let's go to my house and get a basket!"

They ran for dear life, but heard nothing more from Jimmy, and did not meet him on the way. As they drew near Bab's house they saw Mrs. Hale watering her flower-beds. Lucy clutched the goldy stone still more tightly in the folds of her skirt. Why did Mrs. Hale raise her head and gaze at her so steadily? What was she going to say? The

lady did not seem to observe anything unusual in Lucy's appearance, and only said pleasantly, "Good morning, wee auntie"; then looked down again at the flower-bed.

But Bab broke forth suddenly, "Oh, mamma, isn't it perfectly proper and not wicked at all, to have a dear little secret, we two little girls, when we're going to tell you all about it by and by, and we haven't done anything wrong?"

"Why, Barbara *C.* Hale!" cried Lucy, who had tried in vain to stop this flow of words.

"Now, Auntie Lucy, I *hope* you don't think I was going to tell! I was only going to say I think your brother Jimmy's a *very* queer boy."

Mrs. Hale did not answer for some minutes; perhaps she needed time to think it over.

"I don't like secrets, my little daughter,"

she said at last. "But you are sure you mean to tell me this by and by?"

"Oh, just as sure, mamma!"

"Then, dear, I'll try to wait a few days. Keep your dear little secret to yourselves. For you are two good little girls, and haven't done anything wrong, and it's perfectly proper and not wicked at all. But I didn't know Jimmy was a very queer boy."

Then she put both hands to her face, though her garden gloves were so black with dirt. Could it be that she saw anything funny in their sober little secret?

Bab led the way to the back door and up the back stairs. It had been decided to put this one goldy stone in Grandpa Hale's red chest in the attic while they went back for the rest of the treasure. The attic was the place where the very old things belonging to the family were stored away. Lucy looked

around in surprise. She had never seen a spinning-wheel before, or a flax-wheel, or a reel; but the strangest thing was an enormous cradle under the eaves.

"Big enough for a giant baby," said Lucy.

"I know it; it's grandpa's cradle. We'll both get in and rock."

"Miss Barbara," called a voice from the foot of the stairs. "Your mamma says you must go right off to school."

"Oh, that old school!" groaned Lucy.

Bab was standing before the red chest. It was locked. She turned the key in trembling haste. There were several garments in the chest neatly folded.

"It won't do any harm to tuck the goldy stone under this blue coat. Grandpa never comes up here; and if he did he wouldn't care."

They both drew a breath of relief when the precious stone was safely in, and the chest locked again.

"How things do trouble us!" said Lucy. "We can't take the basket now; and what if somebody should carry off our gold?"

They shuddered to think of it, and started for school with unwilling little feet. They must wait till night, though it was a great risk. When school was over for the afternoon, they set forth again for Bab's house with renewed courage. At the foot of the hill they met Jimmy. Up to this time wee Lucy had followed Hiram's advice and refrained from saying a word to Jimmy concerning his very trying behavior. Now, however, as she saw her naughty little brother coming toward them, smiling as only good boys have a right to smile, she could no longer hold her peace.

"I shan't tell you where we're going, Jimmy Dunlee, or you'll ask 'What for?'"

This was said most severely, and was intended to make him thoroughly ashamed of himself. On the contrary, he only whistled, as if he did not mind it at all.

"Well, I'm going somewhere myself," said he; "and I shan't tell *you* where I'm going nor what for!"

"Deary me!" murmured the indignant Bab, and pinched Lucy's arm.

"*We* know where you're going, you naughty, bad boy," said Lucy. "Can't Bab and I go *anywhere* 'thout you go too and keep saying 'What for?'"

"I don't know what you're talking about," returned Jimmy, looking really surprised.

"Why, Jimmy Sanford Dunlee, didn't you go and hide behind that little mite of a brown house 'way down on the bank? Yes,

two times you went and hid. And when Bab and I — *Did* you hear what we said?"

"I didn't hide there, I tell you," protested Jimmy. "Catch *me!*"

He looked them frankly in the face as he spoke, and they both believed him. Jimmy might tease his little sister sometimes, — he had his faults, — but he would not tell a wrong story; you could always depend upon the word of Jimmy Dunlee.

"Catch me doing such a mean thing as that!" said he, and walked on, shaking his head and singing, —

"Down by the Wabash River,
Far, far away."

"There, you heard what he said! 'Twasn't my brother Jimmy that hid in the bushes."

"I know it; but who was it, auntie?"

They named over all the boys they could think of, and at last Lucy said,—

"Maybe 'twas the wind, Bab; the wind, you know, in a keyhole."

They were standing now by Colonel Hale's shed. The door had a very large keyhole, and both little girls stared at it. "I've heard of their making queer noises," said Lucy.

"So have I. And auntie,"—Bab spoke with some hesitation,—"didn't you ever read stories about fairy gold that was bewitched? Maybe that's what ails ours."

"Why, Bab Hale, what makes you think so?"

"I don't think. Only grandpa said at the table this noon, 'All is not gold that glitters,' and I pretty nearly jumped out of my chair."

"But he didn't mean *our* gold. He never heard of our gold, 'thout—'thout— Now, Bab, you didn't go and tell?"

"No *indeed!* All I said was 'Did you ever see any stones all speckled with gold?'

And then he said, ''Member, my child, all is not gold that glitters.'"

"Well, that's nothing. He wasn't talking about Captain Kidd's things."

"No, he wasn't. Let's go get our goldy stone this minute and crack it, auntie; then we'll know what's in it."

They went to the attic, took the stone out of the chest, and cracked it in the shed on a block. Ah, but how the gold did fly out! At any rate, it looked like gold. Bab's doubts were set at rest. She put the pieces carefully into a cup, though I fear she left the hammer on the wood-pile.

"Now here's Katrina's basket," said she; "we'll tip the shavings out of it, and go just as quick down to the bank. I don't feel scared; do you? It *must* have been the keyhole!"

"Where are you going with my basket?" asked Katrina, confronting them in the door-

way. O dear, it did seem as if they never could have any peace!

"Katrina," said Bab earnestly, "I want to ask you a question. We want to know, *is* there anybody lives in that little bit o' house down by the river?"

"No, not anybody. It's just the place for you little younglings to go and play," said Katrina; thinking privately, "'Twill save your burning up so much milk."

"But we've been in there," pursued Bab, "and somebody said"—

"Hush!" warned Lucy.

"I mean we *thought* they said—but maybe they didn't."

"I'd like to know what the dear younglings have got in their heads now," thought Katrina, watching them as they skipped along swinging the basket, while Captain Kidd trotted close to their heels.

XII

THE DANDY DOG

THE precious treasure was still on the cupboard floor; it had not been disturbed in the least.

"I just knew it would be all right," cried Lucy, almost kissing the old coat in her joy.

"I knew it too," returned Bab; "only I wasn't quite sure!"

They put the eight stones into the basket, coat and all, and holding the basket between them, danced gayly out of the cottage. There was nobody hiding there now, that was certain. How silly they had been to fancy there had ever been any one there!

"We've got 'em safe and sure this time,"

said Bab, "and we'll put 'em in the red chest quick as lightning."

"Yes; and before long we'll sell 'em and get piles o' money."

"Do you s'pose we ought to crack 'em before we sell 'em, auntie? We'll ask grandpa about that; grandpa knows everything."

"*Not quite!*" said somebody from behind the bushes.

"Oh, Jimmy Dunlee!" There was no mistaking his voice! "Oh, Jimmy Dunlee, I wouldn't have thought it of *you!* Didn't you say you never went and hid?"

Jimmy only laughed; he would not take the trouble to answer.

"I should think you'd be 'shamed o' yourself!" exclaimed Bab, forgetting her manners; for what was the use to be polite to a boy who told wrong stories? Oh, to think dear

Auntie Lucy should have a brother like this! She and Lucy looked all about, but could see no living thing bigger than a caterpillar.

As they kept on up the hill with the basket, whom should they meet face to face but Jimmy.

"Why, Jimmy Dunlee, it isn't *you*, it can't be *you!*" cried both the girls.

"Why, yes, it is! Who'd you s'pose 'twas?" laughed he. "What have you got in that basket?"

"Oh, don't you peek, Jimmy, don't you peek! I wish you'd go find that boy that keeps hiding behind the bushes and laughing."

"Well, come on and show me where you heard him. We'll fix him!" said Jimmy. The little girls turned back, and he walked with them, feeling very brave, now that they were looking up to him for protection.

"If that's you, Jack Groves, you come out here, come out here this minute," said General Jimmy, breaking off a willow switch and beating the bushes with it.

"If that's you, *Dan Brown*, come out here, I say. What do you mean by scaring little girls? Come out here quick, Dan Brown."

"*What for?*" chuckled the boy in hiding. But come out he would not! It was outrageous! And to add to the insult he continued to laugh.

"Then stay there!" cried Jimmy, very angry indeed. "Stay there, you mean boy!" he shouted very loud, to make sure of being heard in the remotest corner of the clump of bushes. "I didn't s'pose we had so mean a boy in this town! I'm going to send Cookie after you; he has got a horsewhip! Don't be afraid, girls, Cookie'll attend to that boy!"

Nothing more could be done, and they

turned away. At any rate, the gold was safe; and like two little misers the girls clutched the handle of the basket which they were carrying between them.

Jimmy asked no more questions. Catch *him* trying to find out what was in that basket! But all the same he was rather curious; for it did seem singular that they should take pains to cover it up with an old coat!

After he left them they met Hiram with a wheelbarrow. Lucy stopped him.

"We've got 'em; we're carying 'em home. And 'twasn't Jimmy! No, Jimmy has been pounding the bushes and pounding 'em. And he can't find that boy that said 'What for?'"

"You don't say! Well, now, there's something curious about that," said Hiram, scratching his head with a puzzled air.

If there was really a boy hiding in those bushes, why hadn't Jimmy found him?

"It isn't a boy," thought Hiram, though he did not say it aloud. "I've had my suspicions all along that it isn't a boy. But who or what it is I'm bound to find out. I'll know before night," said Hiram to himself, as he trundled off the wheelbarrow.

The goldy stones were fairly got home at last and placed in the red chest, where they were quite concealed under Grandpa Hale's blue broadcloth coat with brass buttons.

"There now, we won't have any more trouble," said Lucy, with proud satisfaction. "Your grandpa'll sell 'em for us, and we'll buy — what'll we buy?"

But Bab was halfway down the stairs. She made two trips, bringing up first a tray filled with common dolls, next her waxen daughter, Columbella.

"Well, Bab, what'll we buy? Wouldn't you like a tiny gold watch?"

"Yes, I should, in a little pocket, and a chain to it."

"I want mine pinned to my waist, Bab. That's newer fashion."

"Then I want mine that way. And diamond rings, auntie, shining like stars."

"Diamond rings, of course, Bab. And *don't* you want a pearl necklace?"

"Yes, that's what I've always wanted. And lots of splendid bosom-pins, like the great ladies. And then," added Bab, as an afterthought, "and then if there's any money left we might give some away. My mamma gives money to people, and they like it."

"My mamma and my papa *both of 'em* give money to people," said Lucy quickly. "We'll give away lots of ours."

"I've thought of somebody that would like it," said Bab, "Phebe Dow."

"There, I was just going to think of

Phebe. Why, Bab, what are you whipping that baby for?"

"For peeking into the red chest!" cried the indignant mamma. "S'pose I'm going to have my child finding out about our money and asking 'What for?'"

"But she's so young! Don't whip her hard, Bab."

"I shan't whip her *soft*, you *may* be sure," said Bab, redoubling the blows; for, like many kind-hearted little girls, she was extremely severe with her dolls.

After this "peeking" doll had been duly punished, the children drew out the double cradle from under the eaves, and placing Columbella in it, climbed in themselves, and lay down, all three together.

"What a big thing!" said Lucy.

"'Twas grandpa's cradle," explained Bab, "and it had to be big, 'cause grandpa was twins."

"Was *he* twins? He doesn't look like it."

"Oh, he isn't now. That was when he was a baby. There was another baby then; and they were *both* twins."

This ought to have made the matter quite clear. The children rocked together for some time in silence. They forgot their riches, forgot their future deeds of charity. They were both tired, and soon Lucy began to grow sleepy.

"This cradle was made just for twins. Do you think it's quite big enough for *three* persons?" asked Barbara, feeling a little crowded. "If one of us should get out," added she, after reflection, "then I'd have more room."

"*I'd* have more room."

Lucy's sleepy eyes opened wide in a moment. "I know what you mean, Bab Hale, you mean *me!*" said she, very crossly, as she rolled out upon the floor. "You always

mean me; and there's your Columbella as big as a — whale!"

"Why, Auntie Lucy, I never noticed! Come back here. We'll put Columbella in a chair."

But Lucy did not rise from the floor. Bab was distressed, and longed to make peace.

"Aren't you glad we're so rich?" said she. "Come back here, and let's talk about grandpa, how he'll sell our stones for us. Isn't he splendid?"

Lucy began slowly to rise.

"Ye-es, he's splendid enough, your grandpa is. But he isn't old, though."

"Now, Aunt Lucy, I'm sure he is; he's very, very old."

"Well, he doesn't *look* old. Not old enough to be '*great*,' like Grandpa Parlin, so there! Why, Bab Hale, he doesn't look as if he'd been married more'n tw-o years!"

Bab was deeply grieved. She thought it a great merit in grandparents to be old. "What does make you talk so, Auntie Lucy? I wish you wouldn't."

Lucy was back in the cradle by this time, while Columbella reposed on a hair trunk.

"It's too bad to talk so about my grandpa when he gave us Captain Kidd, and the captain is *just* as much yours as he is mine. And he's certainly a *very* old man."

"Well, anyway, he can't catch flies like a monkey," said Lucy, meaning Captain Kidd. "Did you ever see a monkey catch flies? He catches 'em 'tween his fingers — just so," — pressing her thumb and forefinger together. "Kids can't — I don't think much of kids."

Deary me, was there anything Bab could do to pacify her auntie? She had never known her to behave like this.

"Did I ever tell you about the little dandy

dog from England that came over with us in the steamboat? Name was Ronto."

"No, you never."

"Well, he was dressed all up like a little boy. Had a jacket on, and a cap on; wore boots. Sometimes he had a fur collar 'round his neck."

"Why, Bab Hale!"

"Well, that's nothing. There was a handkerchief in his pocket, same as anybody; it had cologne on it."

"H'm," said Lucy in high disdain. "Dogs can't use handkerchiefs."

"Well, the lady put it in for fun, — a card-case, too. She showed it to us. She said she took the dandy dog with her when she made calls."

"Did she make calls on the ship?"

"Oh, no; in London. She was a great lady — a countess or a princess. She said

she took Ronto with her when she made calls, and if there was a dog at the folks' houses, then she left Ronto's card, same as she left her card."

"Why, Ba-ab Hale!"

"Yes, she did it for fun. He was a tiny dog, 'bout as big as Tippytoes, and so cunning! He had hairpins in some of his hair."

Lucy shook her head angrily. "Dogs can't put hairpins in their hair."

"No, the lady's maid put 'em in to make it curl better. The hair right on top of his back had been shaved so funny. It made a picture on his back like — well, like a crown or something. Mamma said it was a crest. Do you know what a crest is, Auntie Lucy?"

"No, I don't! I wouldn't know for anything. You can't cut out pictures on a dog's back," cried Lucy, springing up again so vio-

lently that she nearly overturned the cradle. "You'd better stop telling such things."

She did not wish Bab to stop however, for she asked immediately, —

"What kind o' boots did you say he wore?"

"Little bits o' boots, black boots like anybody's, all buttoned up. Four of 'em, you know, for he had four feet. Yes, and when it rained he wore rubber boots, four o' *them*, 'stead o' kid boots."

"Now, Bab Hale!"

"Yes, the maid put 'em on; and he trotted out on deck, pit-pat, pit-pat. But that wasn't all. The funniest was his umbrella! The littlest umbrella, 'bout as big as a saucer!"

"There now, Bab Hale, I *know* a dog can't hold an umbrella."

"Why, *he* didn't hold it. 'Twas fixed some way so it could stay open. Ronto didn't touch it, but it kept spread out over his little

mite of a head just like any folks' umbrella. How you would have laughed to see him trotting 'round in the rain."

"No, I shouldn't, for he wasn't there."

"Why, Auntie Lucy, when I tell you he was!"

"But I just said he wasn't, Bab Hale! Don't you hear what I say?"

"Deary me!" murmured Bab. "Let me go down and ask my mamma; she knows."

"No, you needn't ask her. I'll have to go home now. Can't stop. 'Twas a nice, dandy-dog fairy story," said Lucy; and she smiled so wisely that the small niece nearly cried. "I used to make 'em up when I was little. Once I told my mamma I saw a crow drawing a sled. I told it to make her laugh."

"But this dandy dog was a truly dog, auntie. I didn't make him up. I saw the maid undress him and put on his nighties. And they were just as fine, with lace all 'round."

This was a little more than Lucy could bear. She sprang out of the cradle at one bound.

"Now, Bab, you just hush. It's proper to tell fairy stories; my Auntie Vi tells 'em. But when you go and pertend they're true, then it's wicked."

"But I didn't per-tend. It *is* true, as true as this cradle. So what makes you say it's fairy stories? I tell you, Auntie Lucy, I *saw that dog!*"

Lucy turned on her heel in contempt. "Good-by. It's zac'ly six o'clock — and a little more. Good-by."

And down stairs she ran without looking back.

It was the first quarrel of these little girls after the sweetest friendship of weeks. It did seem very sad. But this was not the end of it; oh, no, not the end of the friendship, I mean.

As Lucy was entering her own house, she met brother Jimmy nearly doubled up with laughter.

"Hiram has found out," said he. "Stop; let me tell you. 'Twasn't Jack Groves that said 'What for?' 'Twasn't any of the boys. And 'twasn't a girl or a man; 'twas"—

"I don't care who said it," returned Lucy, crying now with all her might. "I don't care who knows our dear little secret. It never'll be dear any more."

XIII

THE TWINS' CRADLE

"SHE *conter-dicted* me," sobbed little Lucy, rushing wildly into the house. "I was company to her and she *conter-dicted* me, she did."

"Contradicted you? What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Dunlee, very sorry that there should have been any trouble. "How did Bab contradict you?"

"Why, mamma, I told her she didn't tell the truth, and she said she did, she did; she said it two times!"

Mamma bathed the little flushed face, but asked no further questions; for Lucy only grew more excited by trying to talk.

"There, we'll say no more about it now, my little daughter; we'll wait till after tea."

Lucy seemed so weighed down by her little niece's wickedness that she did not care for her supper; she ate only a crumb of bread and drank a little milk. When she was ready for bed and knelt down to say her prayers, her mother was surprised to hear her praying to God to forgive Barbara's sins, "'cause Barbara was an awful sinner."

"Dear little Lucy," said Mrs. Dunlee, taking the child in her arms, "aren't you naughty yourself? Don't you wish your heavenly Father to forgive *your* sins?"

"Yes, mamma, I wish He would. I'm a little naughty; — not much though. But it's Bab that's bad. Oh, I'm sorry Bab's such a sinner!"

Lucy hid her face in her mother's bosom and wept.

"What does this mean?" thought Mrs. Dunlee.

But Lucy soon poured forth the whole story between her sobs.

"Don't you think anybody's wicked, mamma, and an awful sinner, that doesn't speak the truth? And makes up fairy stories and says it's just as true's this cradle?"

"Certainly, Lucy; it's very wrong to deceive."

"Well, Bab kept deceiving me, mamma. Oh, I didn't know she was such a sinner! Told 'bout a dandy dog, four rubber boots on and an umbrella over him."

Lucy paused suddenly. "Why, mamma, what *are* you laughing at? Do you like to have my Bab tell wrong stories?"

"No, Lucy; but I dare say she has told the simple truth. Bab has travelled a great deal and seen more things than you ever saw or heard of."

"But — but — Why, mamma, dogs don't wear nighties?"

"Toy dogs do, my dear. A few of the grand ladies in Europe own toy dogs as they are called, or dandy dogs, and treat them like their own children. Isn't it foolish?"

"Why, mamma! And didn't Bab tell a wrong story at all, then?"

Lucy went to bed immensely relieved. But an hour later she had not gone to sleep.

"Betsey," she called, "won't you please ask my mamma to come up here and talk more about sin? I do think sin is *so* interesting!"

Betsey reported that the child was "out of her head"; but mamma found that Lucy had only meant to say that the talk about *toy dogs* was interesting.

"Very well," said Mrs. Dunlee, taking a chair beside the bed. "Some of the grand and wealthy ladies are very silly about their

toy dogs, so I have read. They pay large sums of money for them, and the smaller the dogs the more money they pay for them. They take the little pets to a barber, who dresses and curls the dog's hair and sometimes colors it to match the ladies' gowns. They take the dogs to a tailor, who measures them for little coats. They talk baby-talk to the toy dogs and feed them with sweetmeats. There is no end to the silly things these ladies do, Lucy."

"I wish I could see a toy dog, mamma. O dear, 'twas I that conter-dicted Bab. She didn't conter-dict me; did she?"

Lucy fell asleep at last, but kept moaning and tossing; and once her mamma heard her murmuring something about toy dogs, and "sin is *so* interesting."

In the morning she looked so ill that Dr. Porter was sent for.

"What, Snippet, in bed so late as this?" he exclaimed, patting her crimson cheeks. "The birds were up long ago."

But he nodded to mamma, who knew that he meant, —

"Yes, madam, it's just what you and I both thought: it is measles."

"'Tisn't nice lying here all alone," murmured Lucy, after the doctor left. "Where's the baby?"

For little Eddo was not allowed in the room; neither was Jimmy. If Jimmy could have come in he would have told her who had said "What for?" behind the bushes. Lucy would have liked to know; still she did not greatly care. As for those goldy stones in the red chest, they were no more to her just now than so many mud-pies. She was feeling ill and lonely.

Grandma came in with her knitting, the cat

sat yawning and washing her face, the rain pit-a-patted on the roof, reminding Lucy of the dandy dog that pit-a-patted under the umbrella. A truly dog! And she had conter-dicted Bab, dear little Bab, who might never forgive her.

She heard a step on the stairs. It was Aunt Vi's.

"Good morning, wee Lucy," said Aunt Vi in cheery tones. "I mustn't touch you because I've been out in the wet." And then she sang, —

"When it rained it did rain small."

Lucy wished it wouldn't "rain small," it made her head ache. She wished the cat wouldn't purr. Captain Kidd didn't purr. She wanted to see Captain Kidd; but far more she wanted to see Bab, and "make up."

"Won't Bab come ever any more?" she asked that night sorrowfully.

"Pretty soon," said Aunt Vi, who was tak-

ing care of Lucy. "Not yet, for you know, dear, we can't let her be exposed to measles."

Lucy had heard this before.

"Measles *is* so lonesome, Auntie Vi! When you have 'em folks just despise you as hard as anything. *I* didn't want to go and have measles and not have Bab have 'em! What you think?"

But there was comfort in store for Lucy. Bab did have them! Spots appeared on her face the very next day. She had measles of her own accord, without asking anybody's advice. Lucy could not help regarding this as very kind of Bab, and just what might have been expected of her.

"She didn't like to be well and me to be sick," was what Lucy secretly thought.

She smiled when she heard that Bab, like herself, was very lonesome, and that she kept begging to see her "own Auntie Lucy."

Mrs. Dunlee and Aunt Vi pitied both the little prisoners; and Aunt Vi went to Mrs. Hale, and said: —

"Dear Mrs. Hale, if you'll only bring Barbara over to our house in a carriage, we'll put her in the same bed with Lucy. I can take care of two patients just as well as one, and the little girls will be so much happier together."

Mrs. Hale laughed, and shook her head. She thought it would be odd enough to send her own little girl away from home to be taken care of. But her husband said: "Why not? The dear little soul is pining for her wee auntie."

Then Colonel Hale, the kind grandpa, thought of the double cradle, and brought it down from the attic, and took it himself to Grandma Parlin's.

"Too-ra-lee, wee auntie," said he; "if you want to have measles, you must have 'em right

in this cradle, and I'll bring you some company. The cradle is just the size for you twins."

It wasn't an hour before those two little girls were tucked up in the twins' cradle, cooing to each other like doves in a nest. They found that their tiny quarrel had been only a mistake; and Bab didn't blame Auntie Lucy, and of course Auntie Lucy *couldn't* blame Bab! So they forgave and forgot and loved each other better than ever, and decided that measles "wasn't so dreadful and horrid when you and I can have 'em in the same cradle!"

"If you weren't my own auntie, wouldn't it be awful?" said speckled little Bab to speckled little Lucy.

And Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Dunlee tried not to laugh, though it was certainly very droll to see these afflicted children with their faces close together on the same pillow.

Aunt Vi had the care of them; but they didn't stay in the cradle very much after they began to grow better. Their two mothers were in the room half the time, and grandma too, chatting and playing games with them. They could not see the baby yet or Jimmy, but many people called on them and said, "How sweetly they bear it." They felt themselves little heroines till somebody remarked, —

"Ah, but they couldn't bear it quite so well if they had to be sick in the kitchen as Phebe Dow is, with no one to take proper care of them."

The children had not known before of Phebe's illness. They asked if they might not send her some of their lemons and oranges.

"Too bad to have measles 'thout a cradle," said Bab.

"Or any Auntie Vi," said Lucy.

Auntie Vi had taken perfect care of the

"twins"; everybody spoke of it. Ladies who called told the little girls "they could never repay her for her kindness."

"Children never know how to be grateful," said one of the ladies.

"O dear!" sighed Lucy afterward in Bab's ear; "don't you hate to have 'em talk so?"

"As if we were babies," said Bab, "and didn't know anything at all!"

The next time Mrs. Sanford brought them their gruel they both cried, "Thank you" so loud that it waked the kitty out of a nap. Aunt Vi did not know what they were thinking of, or she would have said: —

"Don't try so hard to be grateful. I take care of you because I love you. Be good and happy; that's all I ask for gratitude."

"You'll give them but little more gruel, Vi," said Mrs. Dunlee. "The doctor says they may have chicken to-morrow."

"Oh, may we?" said Lucy. "I hope Betsey'll cook him sitting up!"

"She shall," replied grandma; "the chicken shall be roasted 'sitting up.' We know you're tired of broths."

"Now," said Aunt Vi, looking very mysterious, "shut your eyes, children, and don't open them till I tell you."

The little girls kept their eyes tightly closed for half a minute while Auntie Vi left the room.

"Now open them. And allow me to make you acquainted with Mr. Jim Crow," said she, placing on the table a bird-cage with a very black crow in it. The crow peeped out in a most knowing way, rumpled his feathers, rolled up his eyes and said, —

"*What for?*"

"Oh, now we know. We've caught you, sir, we've caught you," cried the little girls, laugh-

ing and clapping their hands. The more they laughed, the louder the crow cawed out, "What for?" Wasn't it funny? For they knew in a minute that this must be the same little rogue who had been so sociable down by the river. They had never heard that crows could talk; but they do talk sometimes almost as well as parrots.

"Hiram says this one's tongue has been slit," said Aunt Vi, "to make him talk more plainly. He repeats a few phrases such as 'What for?' and 'Hello.' Now listen: I'll ask him a question. "Are you ready for your breakfast, Jim Crow?" The bird rolled up his eyes again, thrust his beak into the bars of the cage, and called out, —

"*Not quite.*"

"Oh, he said that before! he said that before!" The little patients screamed with delight, and the doctor, walking in, said:

"Good morning, Snippet and Flippet. I never saw anybody enjoy the measles as you do. Pity you never can have 'em but once." Then seeing the crow: "Why, where did that little fellow come from? He used to belong to Henry Pike, who lived on the bank in that brown shanty. But Henry went off, and after he died the crow came back here. I believe he picks up a pretty good living in the corn-fields; don't you, Jim?"

"*Not quite*," replied Jim; and then he laughed at his own poor joke.

After the doctor had left, the little patients went behind the door to whisper, "Aren't you glad we know who said 'what for,' Bab?"

"Yes; but there's that gold all locked up, Auntie Lucy. If we hadn't been sick, we'd have shown it to grandpa. But we couldn't 'cause the doctor wouldn't let us go out of the house."

"Doctors are queer," declared Lucy. "Why, we're as well as anybody, and the spots all gone off our faces."

"How do you do, twinlets?" asked grandpa, entering the chamber. "I came to inquire if you've been meddling — either of you — with my red chest in the attic?"

They both blushed guiltily.

"Was it meddling," said Bab, "if we put something in? We only put" —

Lucy broke in quickly.

"'Twas a great secret."

"A great *what?* Well, I hope you didn't take out anything that was in the chest?"

"No, grandpa, we put our — our" —

Here Lucy broke in again.

"We laid some *things* right under the other things; that's all."

"Oh, you did, hey? And then locked the chest? But what did you do with the key?"

He seemed very much in earnest.

"Hung it on a nail," replied Lucy. "On a big nail somewhere, I don't 'member where — not quite."

"*Not quite*," echoed Jim Crow.

"Oh," said Bab, suddenly overcome by her feelings, "won't all the big people please go out of this room 'cept grandpa? We must tell grandpa our dear little secret."

XIV

PHEBE'S PICNIC

"TEEDLE link tum, teedle tum a dee," said grandpa, when the big people had left the room, and he had heard the dear little secret, beginning with Captain Kidd, the pirate, and ending with Jim Crow.

"So you've been hiding your treasure in my red chest? Well, if we can't find the key, we'll have to pry open that chest. We can't afford to lose any of that gold; now can we?"

His eyes twinkled; he was one of the funny grandpas.

"How much should you say this famous gold is worth, chicks?"

The question took them by surprise. Neither of them had the least idea of the value of money.

"Much as four dollars, *I* think," replied Lucy, who sat on one of the colonel's knees.

"Maybe it's only two dollars," said Bab, who sat on the other knee. "We don't know; we haven't cracked it out yet."

Grandpa couldn't speak for half a minute; he was trying not to laugh.

"And who is to buy this gold after it is all cracked out?"

The children looked at each other.

"Won't folks want it to make rings of, and bracelets and watches?" ventured Lucy.

"We've got a lot in a cup, just as clean!"

"So you thought of taking it to a jeweller?"

"Why, grandpa," said Bab, winking fast, "little girls like us? They'd laugh at us, don't you think?"

"Possibly they might, my dear. Still you can't use it as it is; you'll have to sell it to somebody."

"Well, we thought"— began Lucy, and stopped.

"Yes," said Bab, "we hoped"—

Another pause. Lucy tried again.

"Bab says you know so much, you know most everything, and"—

"Well, go on. You couldn't have supposed that I — such a wise man as I — would want your goldy stones?"

Lucy covered her face with both hands. Bab hid her head in her grandfather's coat-collar.

"Let's talk it over," said the colonel, stroking his beard. "You've been behaving like little ladies all through this sickness. I've half a mind to buy you out if we can agree on the terms."

The little girls raised their heads eagerly.

"Oh, Colonel Hale, do you truly want to buy us out?" said Lucy.

"Oh, Grandpa Hale! But you haven't seen 'em yet," said Bab. "You must see 'em first."

"That's not at all necessary, Miss Hale. People seldom look at things when they buy them on speculation. I'm buying on speculation, ladies!"

"Speck-er-lation," repeated the "ladies," sitting very straight now. This was a matter of business.

"Well, can we strike a bargain? Ahem! Will each of you ladies accept five dollars for your share, — making ten in all, — and allow your mothers to keep the money for you?"

"Why-y-y! Oh, do you truly, truly mean it?"

It seemed too much to believe.

"And not spend a penny of it without your mothers' advice and consent?"

"No, indeed! Yes, indeed!" cried the girls in confusion.

In their wildest dreams they had never expected such a fortune. It did not occur to them — why should it? — that dear grandpa was making an extremely poor bargain for himself. They learned ever so long afterward that he took that precious treasure out of his red chest and laughed and threw it away! Yes, "all is not gold that glitters," and those goldy stones were only "iron pyrites," no better than the common stones that lie in the road. Of course grandpa had known it all the while.

He gave Hiram a hearty scolding for having deceived the confiding little girls. Hiram owned that he was "too fond of a joke"; and besides he had not suspected that the chil-

dren took his Captain Kidd story so very seriously.

But just now Bab and Lucy knew nothing of all this. They sat on Colonel Hale's knees, watching him as he took out his pocket-book and gave them the promised money. A nickel was all that either of them had ever possessed before in her own right.

"Oh, how rich, how rich we are!" they cried, as they fondled the crisp new bills and kissed the good colonel.

"And what will you do with your riches?" he asked curiously.

"Why, we don't zac'ly know." Lucy looked at Bab; Bab looked at Lucy.

"We talked about it," said Bab.

"Yes," echoed Lucy; "we talked about it. We *want* some gold watches; but our mammas wouldn't 'low it. We might buy silk dresses and pearl necklaces,—only there's Phebe Dow."

"Poor Phebe Dow," said Bab. "Got the measles; lame, too."

"Lame girls are troublesome," declared the colonel. "Why do you talk about them?"

"Well, she hasn't quite so very much to eat," returned Lucy. "If we could buy nice things for her to eat, you know!"

"I'm sure our mammas would be willing, Auntie Lucy. And then Phebe's clo'es isn't nice. Couldn't we get some new ones?"

"Ho, so you're planning to throw away your money the moment it's given you!"

The colonel frowned darkly; but hugged both the children as he spoke.

Now that their dear little secret was fairly out, the wee auntie and her niece wished it known far and wide. Before many days everybody was talking about it and congratulating them on their good fortune.

"They are capitalists," said Grandpa Parlin.

"Yes," said Grandpa Hale, "and their money is in two good strong banks. One is 'the Mrs. Dunlee bank,' and the other is 'the Mrs. Hale bank.'"

"'Twill last us as long as we live," said both the little capitalists.

And they pitied Jimmy, who had never had so much money; but then, as Mrs. Hale said, neither had Jimmy ever had measles!

One afternoon in the middle of July the little girls were on Grandpa Parlin's lawn, under the shade of the trees, playing with their dolls. Columbella had just been married to Colonel Jiggles of New York, a fine young man, but hardly her equal. He was not as tall as herself by a head, though his stove-pipe hat added very much to his height, and there was great dignity in his ivory-mounted walking-stick.

After the wedding the happy pair rode off

in a stately carriage, with Bab for driver and the kid for footman, while Lucy sprinkled the wheels with rice and threw kisses after the bride. The bride only stared through her white lace veil in return; Columbella was the haughtiest doll that ever made believe draw breath.

At this moment the bridal procession was interrupted by a shout from Hiram.

"Hello," said he, "can't you stop long enough to take your mail?" and he handed Bab a note. "It came on the cat's back, so I'm told. I presume the cat wrote it."

Lucy looked over Bab's shoulder, and they both read it aloud.

"Colonel Hale requests the company of Mrs. Dunlee, Mrs. Hale, and their daughters at a picnic to-morrow afternoon on Breeze Island. Room for another."

"Oh, a picnic!" cried Lucy. "That's the greatest fun in this world."

"So I think," Bab assented. "But who's the 'another'?"

They hastened to the house, and found Mrs. Dunlee in the kitchen with Betsey, who had an egg-beater in her hand. It seemed that mamma had heard of the picnic some time ago.

"And aren't you so happy?" said Lucy. "But who's the '*another*'?"

"Well, Colonel Hale and the four mentioned in the note make five; but he can take six in the boat. He wishes you little girls to choose the sixth one."

"Phebe Dow," said Lucy and Bab in a breath.

"Bless the little dears," thought Betsey.

But Colonel Hale called the two children up to him that afternoon and said, "Too-ra-lee! Is it true that you're thinking of asking that troublesome lame girl to *my* picnic?"

"O dear," wailed Lucy, "who'd you spect we'd ask?"

"Don't you know? O fie! who was it that took care of you through the measles?"

"Auntie Vi. Why, she *was* so good!" they cried.

"Well, then, why can't you be good to *her?* Don't you want to make her happy?"

He was only teasing them. I am afraid he was nearly as fond of a joke as Hiram.

"Why, we never thought of that," said Bab penitently; "we forgot."

"Yes, I dare say. Children are apt to forget; they are not very grateful."

"Grateful!" "Grateful!" Tiresome word! It seemed to the little girls that people were always urging them to be grateful to Aunt Vi.

"O dear," said Bab, quite discouraged, "we can't keep a-being grateful all the whole time, grandpa!"

"It's awful!" exclaimed Lucy in desperation. "'Twould have been better for us if we'd given her *th-r-ee* dollars when we got well!"

Grandpa Hale leaned back in his chair and laughed and laughed.

"There, there, you funny little souls, forgive me for teasing you. Aunt Vi doesn't wish you to wear yourselves all out trying to be grateful. She told me so herself."

"Did she? Oh, did she?" The faces of the little girls cleared in a moment. The debt of gratitude had weighed upon their minds to some degree.

"Yes, if you love her and are good you may let the gratitude go! And what's more," added the colonel, "she couldn't spend time for this boat-ride. I asked her the very first one, and she said she must decline with thanks. But how did you happen to think of Phebe?"

They hesitated a moment; then Bab said:—

"Well, you see, grandpa, Phebe's lame. And then she's had measles; and we know how measles feels!"

"Capital!" The colonel laughed again. "Capital! You couldn't have given better reasons! I love you with all my heart! Well! let's go find Phebe now and make her happy."

Walking all three hand in hand they met Phebe.

"Wait a minute, child," said the colonel. "I used to know your mamma long ago. How old are you?"

"Sev-un," replied Phebe, catching her breath.

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"Sev-un."

"Ah, how old are they?"

"One is a baby,—no, two is a baby," replied Phebe, becoming bewildered.

"I mean how old is the oldest one?"

"The — the — biggest one is the oldest," replied Phebe, scared nearly out of her wits.

The colonel smiled and patted her on the shoulder. She was a gentle little soul, and he had always had a tender feeling toward her.

"How would you like to ride in a boat, Phebe, with these nice little girls of mine?"

"Oh, you don't mean *me!*" she cried, her pale face flushing with joy.

It was settled that all six should meet at three o'clock next day at the boat. Phebe had never been in a boat in her little life; but she was not afraid with a big, grand-looking man like the colonel sitting so near her. Breeze Island was a grassy dell. It looked as if somebody had taken it right up out of a field and dropped it there in the middle of the river.

"Oh, weren't they all so good to let me come!" thought Phebe, as they landed, and the three little girls began to pick off the petals of daisies, saying aloud, —

"Rich man, poor man, beggar-man, thief,
Doctor, lawyer, Indian chief."

Mrs. Hale knew ever so many games. One was the staff-game, rather amusing because you are not allowed to smile, and of course that makes you want to smile. Mrs. Dunlee took Phebe's crutch in her hand; and while they all sat in a circle, she walked slowly and solemnly before them, chanting: —

"My father sent me here with a staff,
To speak to you and not to laugh.
Methinks you smile" —

Here all exclaimed in chorus: —

"Methinks I don't!
I smooth my face with ease and grace!"

As they spoke they all laughed, — every one but Phebe, who really succeeded in "smoothing her face with ease and grace"; and so was the one allowed to "set the staff in its proper place" beside a tree.

"Well done!" said the colonel. "Who knows but Phebe has hit on the very spot where Captain Kidd buried his treasure?"

He looked slyly at Bab and Lucy, who laughed outright. Captain Kidd was no more to them now than the man in the moon. Phebe laughed too.

"Well, if that queer old captain came 'round here at all to bury things, he would be as likely to bury 'em in one place as another; now wouldn't he? Let's suppose it's under that tree. I'm going to dig there, anyway, and see what I can find."

The supper was the nicest that poor Phebe had ever tasted; she enjoyed every mouthful.

After it was over, Colonel Hale took out his jack-knife and pretended to dig around the roots of the tree.

"Upon my word, if this isn't gold, what is it?" cried he, holding up a bright golden eagle, worth ten dollars.

"Wonderful!" they all exclaimed, laughing.

"Now, Mrs. Dunlee and Mrs. Hale," said the colonel, "don't you think I'd better give this to the little girl with the staff who didn't laugh?"

Both ladies said "yes, they thought Phebe deserved it." He placed it in her little hand; and it was touching to see how astonished she looked. She knew he had not found the money in the ground; he had taken it out of his own pocket; but wasn't it the loveliest kind of a make-believe? She had never seen a gold eagle before, but she knew it was a large sum, and when she learned that it was really

WEE LUCY AND HER NIECE.

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meant for her I think she was perfectly happy.

And that good man took her up the bank in his arms after the boat landed, and whispered; "Your mother used to go to school to Colonel Hale when she was a little girl. He remembers her, — she was a good child, — and next Christmas if we're all alive he'll find another gold piece for her under the same tree."

"Did you ever hear of such a splendid picnic?" said Lucy to Bab as they walked up the bank. "Your grandpa pretended he didn't like lame girls. Oho!"

"He's always pretending just that way," returned Bab; "and then he goes and makes 'em just as happy!"

"I know it. He's so good, 'most like an angel. And to think he's going out to California, Bab, and you too, and going to live

right side o' me! Oh, I feel as if I should fly!"

And in the excess of her emotion Lucy nearly stumbled over a stone. "My auntie," cooed Bab, throwing her arms around her little comrade's neck, "my whole live auntie, my *own* auntie. *Do* you s'pose anybody ever loved anybody the way we do?"

"Course not," was the decisive answer. "I'd just like to see 'em try!"

We may as well leave the little girls right here, walking up the hill together. The two mothers heard their love-talk, and thought it "sweeter than a nest of nightingales." Jim Crow heard it. It waked him from his nap on a willow tree. He laughed when he saw the wee auntie and her niece kiss each other. Then he rolled up his eyes very knowingly, and called out, "*What for?*"

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"Grandmother Parlen when a little girl is the subject. Of course that was ever so long ago, when there were no lucifer matches, and steel and tinder were used to light fires; when soda and saleratus had never been heard of, but people made their pearl ash by soaking burnt crackers in water; when the dressmaker and the tailor and the shoemaker went from house to house twice a year to make the dresses and coats of the family." — *Transcript.*

LITTLE GRANDFATHER.

"The story of Grandfather Parlen's little boy life, of the days of knee breeches and cocked hats, full of odd incidents, queer and quaint sayings, and the customs of 'ye olden time.' These stories of SOPHIE MAY'S are so charmingly written that older folks may well amuse themselves by reading them. The same warm sympathy with childhood, the earnest naturalness, the novel charm of the preceding volumes will be found in this." — *Christian Messenger.*

MISS THISTLEDOWN.

"One of the queerest of the Prudy family. Read the chapter heads and you will see just how much fun there must be in it: 'Fly's Heart,' 'Taking a Nap,' 'Going to the Fair,' 'The Dimple Dot,' 'The Hole in the Home,' 'The Little Bachelor,' 'Fly's Bluebeard,' 'Playing Mamma,' 'Butter Spots,' 'Polly's Secret,' 'The Snow Man,' 'The Owl and the Humming-Bird,' 'Tales of Hunting Deer,' and 'The Parlen Patchwork.'"

SOPHIE MAY'S "LITTLE-FOLKS" BOOKS.

FLAXIE'S TWIN COUSINS.

"Another of those sweet, natural child-stories in which the heroine does and says just such things as actual, live, flesh children do, is this one before us. And what is still better, each incident points a moral. The illustrations are a great addition to the delight of the youthful reader. It is just such beautiful books as this which bring to our minds, in severe contrast, the youth's literature of our early days — the good little boy who died young and the bad little boy who went fishing on Sunday and died in prison, etc., etc., to the end of the threadbare, improbable chapter." — *Rural New Yorker.*

FLAXIE'S KITTYLEEN.

"KITTYLEEN — one of the Flaxie Frizzle series — is a genuinely helpful as well as delightfully entertaining story. The nine-year-old Flaxie is worried, beloved, and disciplined by a bewitching three-year-old tormenter, whose accomplished mother allows her to prey upon the neighbors. 'Everybody felt the care of Mrs. Garland's children. There were six of them, and their mother was always painting china. She did it beautifully, with graceful vines trailing over it, and golden butterflies ready to alight on sprays of lovely flowers. Sometimes the neighbors thought it would be a fine thing if she would keep her little ones at home rather more; but, if she had done that, she could not have painted china.'" — *Chicago Tribune.*

FLAXIE GROWING UP.

"No more charming stories for the little ones were ever written than those comprised in the three series which have for several years past been from time to time added to juvenile literature by SOPHIE MAY. They have received the unqualified praise of many of the most practical scholars of New England for their charming simplicity and purity of sentiment. The delightful story shows the gradual improvement of dear little Flaxie's character under the various disciplines of child-life and the sweet influence of a good and happy home. The illustrations are charming pictures." — *Home Journal.*

SOPHIE MAY'S "LITTLE FOLKS" BOOKS.

FLAXIE FRIZZLE.

"FLAXIE FRIZZLE is the successor of Dotty Dimple, Little Prudy, Flyaway, and the other charming child creations of that inimitable writer for children, SOPHIE MAY. There never was a healthy, fun-loving child born into this world that, at one stage or another of its growth, wouldn't be entertained with SOPHIE MAY'S books. For that matter, it is not safe for older folks to look into them, unless they intend to read them through. FLAXIE FRIZZLE will be found as bright and pleasant reading as the others." — *Boston Journal.*

FLAXIE'S DOCTOR PAPA.

"SOPHIE MAY understands children. Her books are not books about them merely. She seems to know precisely how they feel, and she sets them before us, living and breathing in her pages. Flaxie Frizzle is a darling, and her sisters, brothers, and cousins are just the sort of little folks with whom careful mothers would like their boys and girls to associate. The story is a bright, breezy, wholesome narrative, and it is full of mirth and gayety, while its moral teaching is excellent." — *Sunday School Times.*

FLAXIE'S LITTLE PITCHERS.

"Little Flaxie will secure a warm place in the hearts of all at once. Here is her little picture. Her name was Mary Gray, but they called her Flaxie Frizzle, because she had light curly hair that frizzled; and she had a curly nose, — that is, her nose curled up at the end a wee bit, just enough to make it look cunning. Her cheeks were rosy red, and she was so fat that when Mr. Snow, the postmaster, saw her, he said, "How d'ye do, Mother Bunch?"'" — *Boston Home-Journal.*

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